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[SINISTER DESIGNS.]

LADY VIOLET'S VICTIMS.

CHAPTER X.

LADY VIOLET.

For ever, Fortune, wilt thou prove
An unrelenting foe to love?
And, when we meet a mutual heart,
Come in between and bid us part?

In the meanwhile, Lady Violet and her father, while discussing a luxurious luncheon at the Chain Pier Hotel, Brighton, were disturbed by the receipt of a telegram with the following message:

"Return home at once, Lady Constance is in danger."

Lady Violet tossed the telegram aside with a curious laugh, and by dint of long ingrained heartlessness, each laugh she indulged in was of the incisive kind that seemed to leave behind it some indelible impression like mental tattoo marks.

"Meredith is one of those tiresome people who are always imagining all sorts of unpleasant things, and the idea of never saying why Constance is in danger—whether it's fever, or sickness, or what."

The earl, cold, selfish and stern, like most men who like to make their power felt, viewed the matter seriously. Lionel Hargrave, his landscape gardener, who had saved his child's life, he considered imbued with the principles of Heine, and detested him accordingly; and he had never been particularly fond of Constance. This haughty father had always

cavilled at Fate for not giving him an heir to his lordly estates; girls worried him.

"I don't think it's illness at all," he said, gravely, "still, we must hurry home."

"How annoying, and I expect all sorts of charming people this afternoon," said this perfect woman of the world, wishing her sister at the bottom of the sea.

"You don't think those old suspicions we had of her conduct regarding that—ahem, low fellow, Lionel Hargrave, our landscape gardener, had any real foundations, do you, Violet?"

Lady Violet bit her lips. Meredith had sent the telegram, and had she not left her in charge of her sister?

"Surely not, and yet now you mention it, I have a nameless terror. Constance—"

"Good gracious, Violet! my child descend so low as that—impossible. She was not formed by nature to play the part of a laundry-maid."

"She has very strange notions. I always tried to change—we must crush her into submission as of old if there's anything wrong."

"Or pack her off to a French convent or maison de santé," said the earl, pleasantly; "sooner than have my name disgraced, I would rather see her struck off the ranks of the living."

"We'll hope it's not so bad as we think," said Lady Violet, sweeping her magnificent claret-coloured velvet train over the carpet as she rose to ring the bell.

Dress was her passion, and her present costume, slashed with satin over the shoulder, was a miracle of faultless taste and design; in fact her dresses in the Row were anticipated as the greatest curiosities of the season; one in particular having been alluded to in a fashion-

able paper as composed of thirty of the most delicately-woven Persian silk antimacassars embroidered with butterflies and roses. She now ordered the carriage to be in attendance in half-an-hour, and while she was speaking, Sir Hugh Allerton was announced. She hurriedly whispered to her father:

"Not one word to him about Constance," and then sweetly welcomed him: the remembrance of his father's debts, which weighed heavily upon him, often presented itself to her mind, so that if sweet she was always cold.

"You're never going to leave Brighton so soon as this," he said, after the salutations were over; "I expected to see you to-night at the Greville's ball. Everyone was talking of that distractingly pretty dress you wore last evening. I have never seen anything half so lovely."

"Don't go in for man millinery," said Lady Violet, who found snubbing her victims "paid." "Talk if you like of the magnificence of the house or grounds, the silver, the hostess, and the women, but pray leave me out of the question."

"Still merciless," he said, laughing. "I'll write some lines and call them 'To a Cold Beauty.' But really, joking aside, must we lose you so soon?"

"Yes, really, Sir Hugh, papa is most determined, and we leave Brighton by the 3-50 train. No, don't talk of returning for my sake; it is very nice and gallant and all that, but you needn't do it; stay at Brighton, flirt moderately, and don't get cramp at the heart and sink while bathing in too deep water."

"Come, Violet, child, are you ready?" asked the earl at the door, he having just paid the

moderate demand of two hundred and fifty pounds for his accommodation at the fashionable hotel. Earls "bled" well; to use the choice expression of the proprietor.

"One moment, papa; good-bye, Sir Hugh, we shall meet at Christmas, if not sooner."

"But why are you in such a dence of a hurry? Is the Hall on fire? Anybody dying? Has your father gambled away his last shilling and the bailiffs put in an appearance?"

"Then we should most likely stay here," she answered, laughing.

Sir Hugh accompanied them both to the carriage and then turned away, considerably astonished at their hasty departure.

"The earl looks like an old panther retiring to his den," he thought, resolved to have a little very quiet play with some chosen spirits from "The Merryweather Club."

"That would not be a bad husband for you, Violet," said the earl, thinking of Constance, "an only son, good-tempered and quite presentable; but I fear there's some foreign duke you're in love with, if so, beware; he will be as cruel in deeds as he is loving in words: duels and women, killing will be his chief sport."

"Absurd!" cried Lady Violet, her fine mouth curling in derision. "I think I know what foreign counts and dukes want—simply my money. Sir Hugh is a good fellow, a little too tame, perhaps, but he's bent on paying his wretched father's debts, and that will quite impoverish him."

"Sir Phoenix was certainly a fast man and Hugh is paying off his debts in a most honourable manner. Here we are at the station. To tell you the truth, Violet, I feel horribly nervous about Constance."

"She's hardly worth it," said her sister, "for ever in the clouds and reading poetry; morbid nonsense, which I always detested. Give me a practical person who can take care of herself and gives others no trouble."

Very little was said till they entered the train. The earl bought the "Graphic" and "Times." Lady Violet read the "Queen" and devised new costumes.

They passed rapidly along the picturesque country with the many stately mansions dotting the hill-side. They spoke little, but yawned a good deal, sipping their sherry flask and nibbling sponge cakes. As the train entered the Croydon Station Lady Violet observed that the earl started.

"Merciful heavens!" he cried. "Is that Constance?"

Lady Violet gave a little shriek, and, clasping her hands, hurriedly turned to the window.

"Yes; and Lionel Hargrave by her side. Miserable creature! It is then as we feared. Oh, this disgrace is too bitter, too horrid. See, papa, how it will affect my prospects."

"Do you not think I can punish her for her wickedness?" he said, in a low, stern voice. "This infamy must be kept from the world what scoffs and scorn would be hurled on my proud name were it known."

The door of the railway carriage suddenly opened, and Lady Constance, deeply veiled, but without noticing its occupants, sprang in and then leant her head out of the window, as if bidding someone a fond farewell.

Unfortunate girl! Better far have leapt into Lionel's arms and sworn never to leave him, than be consigned to the fury and wrath of those who now hated and despised her. A living death will soon be hers!

"He takes her hand; he is whispering in her ear!" cried the earl, hissing out the words as if some snake-like power were his. "This is intolerable, but before taxing her with her guilt let us first question Meredith and the French detective. I have a scheme, Violet, by which we can be saved. She will then be caught in her own trap."

"Yes, yes," assented Lady Violet, her cruel nature glorying in the thought of her victim's agony, and in the doom awaiting her, "there are ways and means; a secret chamber in Dr. Moseley's house has, we know, sheltered many who, like her, have disgraced their family.

Meredith shall be her attendant, and we must get rid of the lover, Hargrave, at all costs."

A secret chamber! The earl shuddered at the words, they sounded villainous and strange.

"I will banish her from me now for ever, and long suffering must atone for this iniquity," he said, in an undertone, for Lady Constance now regarded them more closely.

CHAPTER XI.

THOU CANST SING OF LOVE NO MORE.

As the earth when leaves are dead,
As the night when sleep is sped,
As the heart when joy is fled,
I am left lone—alone.

For a few seconds not a word was spoken, then Lady Constance, raising her heavy veil, recognised her sister and father. Unaware of Sophia Meredith's treachery, she trusted Lionel's farewell greeting had not been perceived. She kissed her father and sister quietly, and then said:

"You have come home much sooner than you named in your letter."

"And you are sorry, I suppose," Lady Violet answered, seeing how pale her sister was, and how tremulous her voice when she spoke.

"I am glad; it is so—so dull," she said, after a pause.

A fierce smile passed over the earl's face as he watched her closely, and then he whispered something in Lady Violet's ear, for she presently said, in an excited tone:

"You have been passing the day with the De Chastelards, I suppose, Constance?"

Lady Constance murmured "yes," almost inaudibly. Oh! why was she not safe away with Lionel? She trembled, scarce knowing why. How she wished he could have foregone his proud resolve to leave England, and have taken her to some humble cottage home, never to leave him more.

The earl spoke but little; he seemed to be laying plans for the future. As they were seating themselves in the carriage to drive home from the station, the earl whispered to Lady Violet:

"Take her at once to her own room, and do not let her leave till I have seen her."

Terrible words—words of doom spoken in a harsh and acrid whisper by a man who never spared. As he entered his library, he said to the butler:

"Send Meredith here."

"And if there isn't going to be a nice blow up all round, I'll eat my head," said that worthy functionary, foreseeing a family explosion with all a servant's watchful keenness.

Sophia Meredith entered, and at a sign from the earl, seated herself. He remembered she was not lowly born, that he lost nothing by her assuming equality, but how to begin cross-questioning her was difficult, without losing dignity.

"We received your very unpleasant telegram, Meredith," he said, in his measured way. "No, you needn't explain—that fellow Hargrave, forgetting the lowliness of his station, has dared to address my daughter as—as a lover. That is what you meant, is it not?"

"As a husband, my lord."

The earl started to his feet with a desperate oath. Her awful calmness; her merciless purpose quelled his fury momentarily, for the old mocking smile about her lips made him fear she was already gloating over the family's disgrace. Meredith waited for him to continue.

"You are sure they are married?"

"I most firmly believe so; send for Raoul, my lord, he is waiting in the dining-room. He tracked them to the church, and witnessed the service."

"Oh, why was I not there in time?" he said.

"Many have said the same thing in my hearing when it was too late," she answered, coldly. Lionel had wedded his love. She could now part them, and the thought trobbled her own agony of half its sting.

"Request Raoul to come to me here," said the earl, burying his head in his hands; the blow had told home; his honoured name was disgraced; but as for Constance, he would take care she should never leave his roof unguarded till Lionel Hargrave had renounced all claim to her hand.

Raoul, the detective, entered with a somewhat awkward bow and villainous smile. He was a little, pock-marked man, with a restless, shifty eye; and now his face had the expression of one who, having got his enemy by the leg, was trying to see how he looked during the process. English earls were stately and tigerish, he knew, under adverse and unpleasant circumstances, and these were surely both adverse and unpleasant.

"I hear you were summoned to watch this couple—summoned, in fact, from Paris, by Meredith. Now may I ask what motive she had in employing your services?"

"Revenge, milord; women can be very hard-ven day take it into dere heads."

"Revenge! then she loved this fellow too?"

"Oh, yes, extremely; she pay vell, I don't complain; de English lady, Meredith, very just for a woman of her sort."

"You witnessed the marriage?"

"Mais certainment."

"They are married, then, without doubt?"

"Certainly, without doubt."

"He shall be brought to justice and punished."

"Impossible, milord, he can surely claim his wife. You cannot imprison a man for marrying a princess if she is willing."

"She is under age. She is at my mercy, and do you think I will spare a girl who has played so wicked, so diabolical a part."

"Pardon, milord, there is no crime in love. Women generally go wrong from want of it."

"You are not paid to make remarks. It is not your business," the earl said, sternly. "I suppose, like your class, you like money. You would do a great deal for, say, three hundred pounds."

Meredith clasped her hands, looking like a handsome devil. Constance was to be got rid of; kept in confinement, or banished, and Lionel, bereft of his wife, would suffer a thousand pangs.

"Yes, milord, I would do very much for three hundred pounds. I am a respectable married man. I have to cut my loaf into six leetle pieces."

"Then listen. My daughter, Constance, has disgraced herself and her family, and her punishment shall be this: I will have her sent to London under strict surveillance, and kept there till I have settled with this man. He, too, will refuse ever to see her again if I can make it worth his while."

Meredith almost groaned.

"He will be very hard to deal with, my lord, where his affections are concerned. He will fight dearly to regain his wife."

"Is not milord proposes against die English law?" said Raoul, cautiously, "becos I've no wish to act in extremes."

"By no means. I've a right to treat my child as I please. I am pleased to consider her insane. Well, then I go to consult several doctors whose business it is to understand these cases. She is out of mental health—nervous—what you will."

For one instant Meredith regretted her evil work. She thought of the poor suffering girl already doomed to a living death. Of Lionel, restless and broken-hearted, parted from his love, and then her passion flamed afresh, and she said to herself:

"It is well; they shall yet know my power."

"My plans are these," continued the earl, walking hastily over the hearth-rug. "I intend to place my daughter in the care of Dr. Moseley (he also has a maison de santé at Versailles)." Raoul nodded. "I intend to place my daughter under his care for a time. We shall then see how she goes on. If I find her submissive and docile I may relent after a time and release her; as for Hargrave, I will offer him one or even two thousand pounds to

leave England for ever; by these means I save my family from disgrace. Raoul, you accompany me to London this very night. I don't give my bird a chance of escape. So bear witness, man of the law and woman of malice, my daughter is considered insane, unaccountable for her actions; and now retire and send her to me."

"Die English pride is a grand ting," said Raoul, rubbing his hands; "but de English money is better."

Meredith half sobbed with agitation, and thus had she sobbed when the unfortunate Karl had been led to his death, and surely this deed was as foul.

Lady Constance at once guessed the truth as her sister thrust her from her with almost brutal violence on entering her bedroom. She could neither moan nor cry out. She seemed like one turned to stone. Her old fear of her sister returned with tenfold force, as Lady Violet turned the key in the door, and left her with disdainful pity.

"Lionel! Lionel!" sobbed the wretched girl, "why are you not here to save me. Oh! my love! my love!"

And now, hearing footsteps, she started from her knees, and, with uplifted hands, awaited her father's summons. Meredith, who had taken the key from Lady Violet, entered with slow and measured footsteps. The soft lamp-light shone on Lady Constance's wildly dishevelled hair, the golden brown tresses floated below her waist, her cheeks were pale as marble, and there was the bride—Lionel's wife—thrown by Meredith's treachery from the heights of happiness into the depths of despair, soon to be banished from home, peace, and joy for ever. Oh! revenge, miserable revenge, was it worth all this?

"Your father, my lady, wishes to see you in the library," she said, feeling a choking sensation in her throat.

A piercing shriek rang through the room.

"No, no, Meredith!" she gasped, clinging to her dress, "they will take me away. They will torture me till my brain bursts. They will swear I am mad. Oh, Meredith, I have never harmed you, help me to regain my liberty. Show me how I can escape to him. Let me fly through the servants' hall to my love—to Lionel—there is a moment's time. Oh, Heaven! they talk of sending me to London, away from his sight to some doctor's care, and then I shall be mad indeed."

"Do you think I will save you for his delight?" said Meredith, panting hard, and almost dragging Lady Constance from the door. "Can you elude me, or your grasp even in your violence and despair be stronger than mine? No, you shall not escape. In this house you are a prisoner, and in that other house a lunatic!"

"What have I ever done to make you my enemy? It is you who have tracked and undone us both. You who sent for Raoul. Oh! why if you were pitiless did you not save me, warn me in time? Why seek to part us after? I am his wife, his angel, his love. Listen; he told me so. His kisses are still on my lips, they still warm my desolate heart! Husband! Lionel! save me from these tormentors!"

"Yes; it is sweet to torture the woman he loves," muttered Meredith. "It would be sweeter still to wring the last drop of blood from her heart. I killed the man, his friend, who stopped my purpose, and I will visit slow imprisonment on the woman who has aroused his fondest affections. Soon a thick mist shall descend on your mind, Lady Constance. You shall hardly be able to distinguish facts from fancy. You will call on your husband's name in vain—he who is now thinking of you in his cottage-home, dreaming of the joys the morrow may bring."

"Surely only a woman could invent such cruelties," murmured the wretched bride, falling on her knees.

The door again opened, and the detective appeared.

"Lady Constance, will you follow me into the presence of your father?" said Raoul.

CHAPTER XII.

THE EARL'S DECREE.

And lips that curl'd in bitterness and scorn,
Wretched—as they had breathed of this world's
pain,
And so bequeathed it to the world again.

RAOUL experienced some slight trepidation as he saw the fruits of the evil work he and Meredith had planned. The sight of the young girl before him made his blood run cold. He repeated the words:

"Will you follow me into the library, Lady Constance?"

She took her hands from her heavy eyes.

"Will you help me to escape?" she asked.

"Yes, miladi, I will shew you de way. Come," he said, motioning Meredith aside, and Lady Constance followed him as in a dream, until she found herself in the presence of her father, the earl.

For a moment they looked at each other in silence, then the earl grasped her arm and dragged her roughly forward as though he could strike her down to death with his hand.

"Have mercy," she moaned, seeing herself now cut off from all chance of escape.

She shuddered at the danger threatening her, for the dreaded word "asylum" had fallen from Lady Violet's lips.

"Is it true you are married to my landscape gardener? Have you dared to bring this disgrace upon us? Have you well counted the consequences of such a step? because if you are mad it is my duty now to save you from yourself."

She rose and faced him, checking her sobs; desperation had arisen, and she was, for the nonce, reckless.

"Yes, it is true; but how can I make a man such as you appreciate the beauty of goodness—the nobility and worth of such a soul as his? I am proud of his love."

He seized her roughly by the shoulder, and the physical pain produced by this grasp seemed a sudden revelation of how completely she was in his power; it unnerved her.

"Spare me, madame, these degrading avowals, they only prove more than ever your mind is weak and unguided. He has been in my service just three years; he is now, I need hardly say it, discharged."

And he laughed bitterly.

Lady Constance recoiled from that iron grip, that biting tongue.

"You do not know what it is to be parted from one you love, because you are incapable of feeling—pride is the one sentiment of your nature. You bade me accept as husband one of the miserable profligates who dined at your table, and whose vulgar vices I despise and loathe. Because a man has Norman blood in his veins, is he any less a villain? Because he can put a coat of arms on his carriage panels, is he any less a drunkard? I know the class," she continued, her passionate, wan cheek burning anew; "they dupe wretched women, and ruin tradesmen, and wreck the sanctity of domestic hearths for a caprice, and because they have a title. They out-vie mechanics often enough with their revels and riots. Is sin any less sin because it is gilded, and is not human love sacred? I say I glory in the husband my heart has chosen."

"How dare you call him husband in my presence?" he said, almost striking her to the ground. "Do you know what you've done, madame? Disgraced one of the oldest and proudest families in England. To think you should be my daughter. From this hour I renounce you, and you shall be taken away to-night, and I pray Heaven I may see your face no more."

How could she kneel and beg forgiveness or mercy from a tyrant such as this. What hope for her but the grave? And the light of the cottage home she had delighted to picture could never shine for her. No sweet childish voices; no fond arms outstretched to welcome her,

would now enchant and soothe her senses. For money is all powerful, and pride a fiend.

This cruelty broke her down. All she had lost flashed through her mind. Lionel's agony and despair too on the morrow when he would seek her in vain; his unconquerable bravery in fighting to regain her; his patient, untiring search; and withal his breaking heart, presented themselves in turn to her imagination. She threw herself at the earl's feet and implored him by all that was humane and Christian to save her this fearful wrong—this life-long imprisonment.

"Let Lionel take me away to Australia—anywhere," she urged, wildly. "I shall be safe with him. Say I am dead, papa, but restore me to my love. Banish me for ever; take the money that is mine by right, and you shall never more hear of me. I will be for ever lost to you. If you knew what it is to be severed from one dearer to you than life, you must have pity on your child. You wept when my mother died, oh, weep now for me. She said to you on her death-bed, 'Constance is weak and young, deal gently with her for my sake.' If I have been rashly undutiful forgive me, as you hope one day to be forgiven. Do not be my executioner, or your conscience may one day smite you like a scourge. Let Lionel see me again—let him take me away over the sea to a freer land than this, where Nature's voice is heard in less woe than here. He will return a rich man; he will make a name."

"Such ravings only prove you are mad. You are not responsible for your actions; do not try me too hard, madame, or your punishment may be even worse and more severe than you anticipate."

"I am not mad, papa. Oh, believe me, I am not mad. Let me see him once again—but once again."

"You are going away to-night to a place where you will be put under the care of a most clever and experienced doctor. Your actions will be restrained in future, less we have our name tainted by the news of your attempted suicide. I do not consider you in a fit state to remain here; neither, I need hardly say it, does your sister Violet."

"I am her victim!" she sobbed; "and where will you send me to—London?"

"That is my affair. You will find yourself in a few hours time in a comfortably-furnished padded room, where no lovers will seek to turn your head, and where you will be watched and tended by trained assistants."

"Merciful heavens! You will even yet have your wish granted. I shall slowly lose my reason."

"Your rash insanity has tarnished the fair fame of one of the noblest families in England. You have married my landscape gardener. Some of that cursed romance of which Claude Melnotte was the hero has worked on your diseased imagination. When your aunt, my sister, Lady Clarissa, forgot her rank and station and engaged herself to a lawyer's clerk, my father banished her to a French convent for ten years, where she expiated her folly in working, weeping and death. We are not of a race that will permit its women to sin without suffering."

"You will blight my youth, papa. You will shut me up in an asylum. I, who have lived in the blessed light of Heaven, and of Lionel's smiles; who never harmed a living thing, and I am so young to be sent into banishment. Would that I had perished under your cruel eyes that day in the lake, when your craven friends stood round and looked on, and gave no aid."

"You must bear the penalty I inflict; and you will soon see your—your husband will readily accept the bribe I shall offer him to depart, and refuse all claim to you. He is venal, like his class. You will believe in his rascality then, I suppose?"

"Never!" said Lady Constance, clasping her hands. "Money has no charm for him. He has refused to let me share his poverty till he can give me a fitting home. And what is grandeur to me without him? Alas! I shall perish bereft of hope—my sister Violet's

victim, for it is that base mind which set Meredith on to track and ruin us. My brain may be weak, because I am loving. Will this not make you spare me? Ah! to be mad, slowly driven inch by inch along the horrid road that ends in delirium. And must this be the end? A perfect love, and a perfect sorrow."

"Filled with the pride of life, and a wicked Paganism merely seeking its own gratification, you defied me. You only half finished your work. Had you left England with this man I might have failed to discover any trace of you, but now you are in my power, Constance Hargrave, and take the consequences."

She saw all was lost, and turned her mind to the contemplation of how she could best elude her persecutors. No prison could be more impossible to escape from than the establishment of Dr. Ebenezer Moseley, a villain of the first quality, whose dipsomaniacs never troubled their families, provided their families paid a certain price, and whose epileptics were nearly all choice specimens of monomaniacs, who fancied large sums of their money had been lost in chancery suits, and yet kept boxes in which they fancied splendid rent-rolls were still deposited. All these were more or less victims of family pride, spite or cruelty. She had one hope—Lionel's daring courage would never falter. He would plan some deed to rescue her—that glowing organisation and brave soul would devise her escape. The man who had drawn her from the waters of the lake still had the power to save her from the deadlier stream of madness and despair. She ceased pleading, and mutely awaited her sentence.

After Lady Constance had been conducted to the presence of her father, Sophia Meredith saw Raoul's small, rat-like face at her elbow.

"Give me a few minutes conversation," he said. "You must not forget to pay me. I like money. Die English lord is rich; but you do not escape me."

Meredith opened the smaller drawing-room door, and beckoned him to enter.

"Times have changed, mademoiselle, have they not, since we were in Russia? I was den in die secret police, and you were supposed to be Madame Berges, die esteemed widow of Antoine Berges, some time chef to his Majesty die Zsar of all die Russias, and den you vere Mlle. Julie, die friend of die Count d'Artois, engaged to our handsome gardener, whose wife have just gone in dere."

"No need to recall the past, Raoul."

"You tell a Frenchman dat? Noting escape my eye. I recall die past to be paid. I must have something for to hold my tongue, or dey shall know how many times you change your pretty name. It was Coralie in Paris, and Madame Blondini in Madrid, and Margareta in Vienna, and now ve are Sophia Meredith; die English love der grand respectabilities, and if I open rader vide my mouth, you get die sache ver quick."

"How much will satisfy you?" said Meredith, taking out her purse.

"De count was generous, mees, you are rich."

"Speak low or Lady Violet will hear you."

"How mooche? Say fifty pounds. You pay me dat. I will give you a leetle kiss. I vill love you truly. I vill give you die affections of a married soul."

He grinned horribly as she threw the gold towards him, and counted the pieces slowly over.

"Sentiment never suited you," said Meredith, leaning back wearily in her chair. "Gold and soup are your two weaknesses; be an open villain with me, but spare me your attentions."

"You vill not take me for lovare, dear? I am leetle man, but good. You tink because I talk simple, I aet simple. But no, my beautiful Meredith, Hargrave vant you not at all; he 'ave a charming wife, such hair, such teeth and eyes. Bah! leave them alone."

"If you play me false, I will reveal your treachery; you are a traitor to your government, to your dupes, and to me!"

"Poor Karl," said Raoul, unmoved, "'twas a brave soul. He believed in philosophic equality. Mon Dieu, how Hargrave fought for his life; they cheered him too; die Russians hate die police. Beware, mees, you play mean game. You burn your fingers, you rob Hargrave of his wife, and vat you gain? Noting."

"Nothing! when I can part and torture them? Nothing? when I am nearly sure Lionel is the heir to wealth and fortune, which I will now never help him to regain. You know I can be jealous. He loves her,"—dreamily—"she is for him a goddess. Their breaths have mingled; delicious pulsations increase their joy. Do I want more than this to feed my jealousy?"

"But he care not for die spells of your harmful eyes. And you are English too, and so fierce. Your eyes flash like those of some tigress in a cave where there is no escape, but you care not for Raoul—always Hargrave. I tink you are served right at last."

"Silence!" said Meredith, biting her lip till it bled, and her dark beauty was now lit with baleful charm, "or I will kill you with this pistol I carry in my breast. "Yes, it is loaded; there are times when I value life so little I care not what becomes of me. By-the-bye, will you have some refreshment, Raoul? Can I offer you any coffee?"

"Not from your hands, mees, you might poison it so nice; antimony is die voman's poison. I vill 'ave a glass of good English beer drawn from die large vat by the honest John Bull die butler, but I take it from him alone. Hush! Lady Violet is calling you."

Meredith ran hastily up the stairs, and Lady Violet, beckoning her to her room, said:

"The gipsy woman who said she told your fortune wishes to speak to you; above all, guard her from Lady Constance, or she may find means to send a note to Lionel Hargrave. I wonder, Meredith, a woman of your sense applies to vagrants of her class for amusement."

"Pardon, my lady, I admit it was foolish," said Meredith, hastily.

Aphra awaited her with some impatience. Lionel had sent her to the hall to ascertain if any danger threatened his bride, for he had heard of the earl's sudden return—had, in fact, caught a glimpse of his stern features through the railway carriage window.

"What do you want with me," said Meredith, trying to read the meaning of Aphra's face in the dusk.

Aphra smiled grimly. She could see no trace of Lady Constance. The place appeared in confusion; lights twinkling at the various windows, and servants hurrying to and fro.

"You left in our tents this afternoon a fine gold chain that you usually wear under your dress; it was snapped in two."

This had been Lionel Hargrave's gift to her years ago.

"Give it me," said Meredith, reaching out her hand.

"Not so," said the gipsy; "you are no friend to him; you shall retain nothing he gave you; I have taken care it is destroyed."

She had, in reality, sold it for five pounds, and saved the money for Lionel in case he should ever be in need of it.

"How do you know I'm not friendly with him?"

"Because I mistrust you. I can read faces. There are none of the generous impulses of the human heart written on your iron brow; but sometimes the schemer falls in his own net, and the pit he digged for others is his own grave."

The carriage now dashed round to the hall door. Aphra stared as Meredith abruptly withdrew.

"Send away the gipsy woman," she cried to Raoul, who was warming his hands by the kitchen fire; "and if she won't go, call the dog."

Raoul proceeded very gingerly along the yard. He had a natural antipathy to vagrants, like a bulldog has to cats.

"You are requested to leave," he said, with mock courtesy, "or we must call die great dog,

which vill be a peety; you run then very quick."

"I go," said Aphra, "and leave both curs behind."

This mystified Raoul, who had never heard the word before.

"Die English tongue is very strange," he said to the butler, who handed him another glass of ale; "but spoken by an Egyptian it is shocking: she call me a cur."

"And she wasn't far wrong," muttered the butler, who had his own reasons for keeping detectives out of the house. How if the earl should wish his silver suddenly produced? For the butler had lost heavily at the Sandown Park races.

(To be Continued.)

"WE NEVER LET FATHER WORK."

"He was getting feeble, while we were strong,

And had work enough to do,
And nothing e'er pleased us boys so much,
All the busy season through,
As to see dear father without a care,
Reading the news in his easy chair.

"Oh, no, we never let father work!"

Said the pale and weeping boy,
"We laboured with steady, willing hands
To fill up his days with joy,
Though we knew love's debt we could never pay,
Should we work for him till our dying day."

Brave, stalwart lads were this noble three
Who had borne their part so well,
And what sorrow filled their sad young hearts

No mortal can ever tell,
As they saw the form they loved so dear,
Crushed and maimed, on its lowly bier.

"He was taking rest in a shady place,
His paper upon his knee,
When his doom was sealed by the falling arch,"

Said this sorrowing lad to me.
"It is very hard to have him go
In this way, when we loved him so."

The sire had much to make life sweet,
I thought, as I left the lad,
Compared with what, in busy life,
Full many a father had—
Boys proud to toil, and never shirk,
That "dear old father" need not work.

M. A. K.

CAPTAIN T. RITCHIE, M.P., recently distributed the Queen's prizes and certificates gained by the students of the Old Ford-road School of Science and Art, and in the course of his address referred to the lessons to be derived from the Exhibition at Paris, and of the immense importance of the efforts which are now being made in this country for a widespread dissemination of technical education.

SIR CHARLES REED has read a paper before the Society of Arts on Education at the Paris Exhibition. There was a hope, he said, that, under men like M. Waddington and M. Jules Simon, France would work up her schools to a higher efficiency. The result of his observations at the Exhibition was that England had no right to consider herself at the head of the education of the world.

SOME enterprising gentlemen at Manchester have made a discovery at Knowsley, the principal seat of Lord Derby. It is known that photographs of Peel Castle, Isle of Man, represent the place in ruins; but Lord Derby has in his possession a painting of the castle as built 373 years ago. The picture has been photographed by Mr. E. Banks, of Manchester.



[FOUND IN THE CHURCHYARD.]

ALICE DESMOND'S TROTH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"That Young Person," "Why She Forsook
Him," &c., &c.*

CHAPTER XX.

LOVE'S FAREWELL.

Somewhere in the dim hereafter
I shall find you, oh my own.

THE flat had gone forth; heavy grief fell on Bolton Castle and its inmates; it seemed to Edwin Bolton that never sorrow had been like unto his sorrow. Alice Morton, the daughter of a long line of earls; the darling of a London season; the one love of his life, lay in prison, awaiting her trial for the wilful murder of William Gordon.

The magistrates to a man had been against her; to them her youth and beauty had but aggravated her guilt; they judged by appearances. This artist had been a stumbling block in her path, and as such she had swept him away. No other human creature, they argued, could gain ought by Gordon's death, while her happiness and freedom alike depended on it.

All that money could do, all that agonising care and anxiety could suggest, was done in Alice's defence. The old lawyer, who had brought her from her childhood's home, and the wily detective who had at first suspected her, believed firmly in her innocence, yet both confessed there was the strongest case against her.

Lord Bolton never wavered in his loyal trust in her, whilst Edwin felt that if the truth were discovered too late, and his darling sacrificed

to a cruel mistake, life would hold for him nothing worth living for.

Every inquiry had been made, every search instituted. No stranger had been seen at the castle or even in the neighbourhood on that fearful August night. The medical evidence and the finding the pistol outside the arbour clearly proved it was not a case of suicide. The fact of the appointment; the stains on her dress; the relationship she had held to the dead man, alike connected Alice closely with the mystery, and cruellest of all, the prosecution summoned Edwin Bolton to appear as a witness against the girl whom he would have given his heart's best blood to protect.

Lady Alice Morton was not doomed like many hapless prisoners to languish months in suspense, before her friends had recovered from the shock of the magistrate's verdict, in the gloomy days of November the assizes came, and the last scene of the Elcheater Tragedy, as it was called, would be played out.

Edwin Bolton had resolved one thing; he would see Alice again before the day when all eyes would be turned on her in a felon's dock. He would see her and assure her once again that nothing on earth or in Heaven could shake his faith in her.

It was easy to see her, yet during the many weeks of her imprisonment he had never before attempted it. He meant to wait until with joyful voice, he could announce her freedom. Alas, all his struggles had failed, but he would not longer stay away, a cruel fate might soon remove his darling from him; he must see her once more.

"Father," he said, to Lord Bolton, three days before the morning fixed for the trial, "I am going into Elcheater."

Lord Bolton may have been singularly blind. Edwin's utter indifference to women may have deceived him. Certainly he had no idea of his son's love for Alice Morton. Edwin was not one to wear his heart on his sleeve; his father had ascribed all his interest and anxiety in the

girl's fate to a chivalrous love of justice, nothing more.

"To Elcheater!" he repeated. "Do you mean to take the prison?"

"Yes, I am going to see her."

"Is it wise?" asked his father, quietly. "Your mother will be there to-morrow; she can take any message from you. Alice knows your efforts in her cause; she will not expect to see you."

"I am not going for her sake, I am going for my own," said Edwin, hoarsely. "She is the one woman in the world I care for; the truest, purest soul Heaven ever made, and they are going to take her from me. I know as well as though I had heard the sentence they will kill her, and her innocence will be proclaimed too late. I must hear her speak—touch her hand; we two must stand alone once more; must say good-bye, and do you think we could bear it after Friday?"

"Edwin," exclaimed the peer, astonished. "What does this mean? Would you tell me you love Alice?"

"Love her!" repeated Edwin, sadly. "If to care for nothing else on earth, to have set every hope on her, to feel the world will be a blank without her be to love her, well then I love her."

"It makes very little difference now," said Lord Bolton, gravely, "otherwise I should have been most averse to her marrying you. Now no one need ever know about it."

"Averse," said Edwin, bitterly; "and why?"

"She is a great heiress and you——"

"I am an honest man. Her guardians might have kept Alice's money if they had only left me herself."

"No one will know now," repeated his father. Then he added, sorrowfully, "I wish this had not been, Edwin, at best your life will be a shadowed one now."

"And what will hers be?"

"I am afraid to think."

"I should like the whole world to know how

"I love her," cried Edwin, passionately. "I should like to show my trust in her to all England, but for you and my mother I would beg her to let me."

"To let you?"

"Yes, by giving herself to me now, and if she cannot be my wife at least die wearing my name."

"Edwin?" horror-struck.

"Have no fear, father, she would not consent however I urged it. Alice Morton will bear her burden alone."

"And does she know?" asked Lord Bolton, eagerly.

"Yes, she knows I love her. I could not let her go without telling her that much."

"It was not wise, Edwin."

"No, it was but adding to her trouble. But she knows I love her, if not wisely, at least too well."

Edwin Bolton had no difficulty in obtaining admission to the Elcheater prison. Until Friday Alice could see such of her friends as she would. The appearance of her guardian's son, who had been foremost in his efforts for her defence, excited no surprise in the mind of the officials.

They stood face to face soon—these two who, through the long, idle summer months had all unconsciously loved each other, and discovered their affection only when the shadow of an awful mystery separated them, and they could meet only in a prison, and heard ever and anon the dull tread of the warden in the passage beyond.

To outward eyes Edwin was the more distressed of the two. Lady Alice was perfectly composed. Her face was a little paler, a little thinner, than when her lover had seen her last, but otherwise there was little change.

Looking at her it seemed strange that anyone could believe her guilty. There was on her mouth an expression of unutterable calm and peace. Her large, velvety eyes had no shadow of anxiety in them, and the autumn sunshine which came in through the grated window turned her hair to bright gold, and made a halo round her head such as the painters used to represent in the portraits of the Madonnas.

Her very beauty—her very calm—unmanned Edwin. She seemed to him a child unconscious of danger. He could not bear to look at her and think of the doom which so surely awaited her.

"It was good of you to come."

She held out her hand. He bent and kissed it. Think no shame of his manhood if I tell you he let a tear fall on it.

Remember, she was his first and only love. He had not fretted away his affection in idle flirtation. His heart had known but one passion, and it was for this girl whom fate seemed taking away for ever.

"Good to myself," he answered, tenderly.

"Alice, I have failed—failed miserably. I have discovered nothing."

And she who was in such sore peril forgot her own trouble to comfort him.

"You have tried nobly," she said, gratefully.

"If you have failed it is because an impenetrable mystery hangs over poor Mr. Gordon's death. You must not reproach yourself that you have not done that which all say is impossible."

"Can you speak of it as impossible? I could not bear it, Alice."

"I can bear anything," she murmured, "while you trust me. Edwin," with a wondrous light shining in her eyes, "now I know I must look on my life as counted by days and hours. I will hide nothing from you. I love you, dear, just as you love me. I never knew how I began to love you. When I found it out it had grown to be a part of my life. If things had been otherwise—if suspicion had fastened on me strong enough to blacken my name, but not to take my life—I never would have told you. Had they doomed me to drag out my days in one long assize, innocent in point of law because not proved guilty, but condemned in every heart, then, my darling, I would have hidden my love for ever; but now I shall not linger to cast the slightest breath of scorn upon your name. Now, just this once, I may tell you you never could have loved me better than I did you."

He took her in his arms then and kissed her passionately. But he spoke no word. His heart seemed too full for speech.

"Promise me one thing," she murmured. "Do not be in Court on Friday. It would be too much for you."

"And what for you?"

"I can bear it better if you are not there."

"There may be hope, Alice."

She shook her head.

"Every proof of my guilt seems ready. I wonder sometimes, Edwin, what convicts a real criminal when they bring such a burden of evidence against an innocent one?"

"My mother is coming to-morrow, Alice."

"To say good-bye to me. Ah, Edwin, the worst will be over to-day. To-day I say farewell to you."

"But you will see me again."

"No," she answered, firmly. "If Friday dooms me, as I feel it must, you and I shall meet no more. From the moment you know the verdict you must look on me as dead. Only think, Edwin, what a little while we have known each other as people generally count time; yet I seem to have known you years in my own mind. You must go," she added, bravely; "Mr. Marston will be here soon. Good old man, I think he feels more anxious about Friday than I do, for he persists in hoping, and I hope nothing now."

"Ah, Alice, how happy we might have been; nothing could have prevented our marriage."

"I think, dear," said the girl, tenderly, "two people who love each other as well as we do, very seldom are married; it is too much happiness to come often. Money, rank, or some shadow, however small, creeps in between them, and they drift apart. Oh, my darling," added Alice, tears at last trembling on her eyelashes, "I'd rather lose you like this, when we both love each other so truly, than that that love should weaken."

"Nothing ever could weaken my love, Alice. You are my first love, and you will be my last!"

She looked at him tenderly, yearningly.

"No, I don't think you will ever love anyone else as you do me, only when the years pass, dear, and my memory grows, not fainter, but more distant, then I think you will marry. You will never love your wife as you do me, but she will love you. Men don't often marry the woman they love, dear, as well as the one who loves them. Good-bye, Edwin; your trust in me has smoothed my way. Give my dear love to your sisters; tell them to expect the worst, for only a miracle it seems to me can prove my innocence."

"Alice, is there nothing I can do for you, darling, it would make me happier."

"Say a word of comfort to my old Martha for me, and, Edwin, ask your mother to be kind to Nancy. I often think now I let her see how little I liked her."

Once more Edwin held the slender form in his arms; once more he kissed the arched lips, and then he went sorrowfully out, thinking never more to see the form of the girl he loved, for Alice Morton had spoken truly—it seemed little short of a miracle could proclaim her innocence.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN THE CHURCHYARD.

Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season here.

Edwin Bolton was true to his word. He did not forget his promise to say a word of sympathy to poor old Martha for the loss of her mistress and nursing. The very evening of his return from Elcheater he sought out the old woman, and told her how her lady had remembered her.

"Oh, Captain Bolton," cried the faithful creature, with tears in her eyes, "they can't be so wicked as to kill my lady—her that I've nursed in my arms an innocent child—her that had a kind word for everyone! They can't kill her, can they, sir?"

"I hope not," said Edwin, earnestly; and then he told the message to Nancy.

"It's just like Lady Alice," commented Martha; "there's none she forgets. Not kind to the girl! Why, she was a great deal kinder than she deserved. Heartless thing! to run off after her pleasure when we are all in such trouble."

"Do you mean the girl has left the castle?"

"Yes, sir, I do. The very night of the murder she was cross and snappish like, and the day after Lady Alice was taken away she went to Lady Bolton and told her she couldn't abide to stay in a place where anything so awful had happened. She must have distraction, she said, and she got it, sir, for she went off that same day."

A sudden thought struck Edwin, but he put it from him. It seemed preposterous.

"I suppose she had not been here long?" he said, to encourage the old woman to go on talking.

"She came soon after we got here, sir. A strange girl she always was. Not one of the servants could bear her. She was too secret."

"Was she young?" asked Edwin, curiously.

"Yes, sir, and a beauty, too. A deal she used to think of herself."

Edwin Bolton left the old woman with a strange hope at his heart. It was past six then, but late as it was he ordered his horse. The family had to dine without him that night, for when the gong sounded he was far on his way to Elcheater, where Detective Grimes was located in very snug apartments until Friday's verdict was known, and his efforts to aid the cause of Alice Morton over.

The detective was at supper when the captain arrived. A frugal man, he took his evening meal midway between seven and eight. A foaming jug of ale, some savoury stewed cheese spread on crisp brown toast, a long clay pipe and tobacco pouch looming in the distance, completed the detective's fare. He pushed away plate and glass quickly as Edwin entered.

"What's up, sir?" he cried. "You've found out something, I reckon."

"I think so."

"Then no more supper for Joe Grimes to-night. Bless your heart, Mr. Bolton, I'm as interested as I can be in this case. I've never felt so puzzled in my life. The young lady's innocent; I'm pretty sure of that, but I can't give a guess as to the real guilty one."

"Look here," said Edwin, leaning against the back of a chair, and facing the detective anxiously, "you argue that the person who murdered William Gordon was an inmate of the castle?"

"I'd stake my life on it."

"Then don't you think suspicion would naturally fall on anyone who left the castle suddenly directly after the murder?"

"All your guests left, I believe, Captain?"

"I am not speaking of guests."

"Then I don't understand you," said the other, bluntly.

"Well, Lady Alice Morton had a maid—a very pretty girl—disliked by all the other servants on account of her reserve. The very night of the murder this Nancy Bates appears agitated and anxious. Soon after she is off, throwing up a good situation and leaving no clue to her whereabouts."

"The girl must be found," decided Grimes. "You haven't a description of her, I suppose, Captain Bolton?"

"I daresay I could get one. You think there is something in it?"

"It's the first bit of light on the subject yet. The next thing's to find the girl. We've no time to lose."

"No, indeed. What do you propose to do?"

"Go back with you to the castle, sir, and find out all I can about this girl."

"But there's nothing to find out."

"Ah, you're not used to it, sir. It's wonderful how a few questions refresh anyone's memory. I shall at least get to know where she came from, and how she came to be engaged at the castle."

Edwin shook his head doubtfully.

"It's more than a year ago. It will be very difficult to trace out who or what she was before, besides, how did she come to know Gordon? Depend on it whoever killed him knew him well. Hatred, and hatred only, caused that crime. Now what cause could a waiting-maid have to hate one of the most rising artists of the day?"

"He sprang from nothing, sir, remember. No one ever heard anything about his family. You say this girl Nancy is pretty. She may have been one of his models."

"How can you find out?"

"Get a list of his pictures. Don't you despair, sir. You have worked wonders already. I feel much more hopeful than I did an hour ago."

"And you will come back to the castle with me?"

"Yes, we can do nothing until we know more, and the castle is the best place for us to ask questions in."

"I rode over; how shall we go back?"

"We'd better have a fly over to Bolton village, sir, and walk the rest of the way. I'd rather go into the castle quietly. I want to make the servants talk. We must be careful not to give them a hint who it is we're looking after."

He took up his beer and drank off every drop, pushed the plate of cheese away from him with a little sigh—detectives are but human—placed the tobacco-pouch in his pocket, and turned to his visitor.

"It's hard on me now, sir, we'd best be going."

"You're sure we shall get a fly?"

"Certain, sir. There's few enough people in Eloxester want them at this hour."

Detective Grimes was right; a fly they got without delay or difficulty, and by lavish use of a silver key their Jehu made such despatch that it was barely ten when they entered the narrow street which was the beginning of Bolton village. Grimes stopped the fly there, and the two got out.

"We can get into the castle the garden way, I suppose, sir?" asked the detective.

"Oh, yes, we'll just cross the churchyard, that will bring us nearly opposite a little gate in the grounds. I have a pass key."

It was a clear frosty night; the moon shone without a cloud, making the November evening as light almost as day.

"I wish they had not buried him here," cried Captain Bolton, impulsively. "How can we forget this awful business even if all goes well when we must pass his grave at every turn?" For they had lain the murdered man to rest in a shady corner of the churchyard, and either by accident or design the authorities had chosen a spot which the castle family must of necessity pass every Sunday when they entered the churchyard from the rustic gate leading into their own grounds.

"You won't mind that, sir, I expect, when once Friday's business is safely over."

Edwin Bolton, perhaps from being most familiar with the spot, was walking a little in advance; as he neared the nameless grave his heart gave a great leap; there was something strange about the mound; a human form was stretched across it in all the wild abandonment of grief. In the still night air he caught the sound of a woman's sobs; he stood motionless, and the detective came up with him. No need to call his attention, his lynx eye had taken in the whole scene.

"Touch her," he whispered.

(To be Continued.)

TOO HASTY WOOING.

MANY a lover has lost the object of his affection by his slow and dilly-dallying courtship. While he was hesitating some more decided and daring knight has come upon the stage and proudly borne off the prize.

But, on the other hand, hearts cannot always

be taken by storm. Wooing may be too hasty and precipitate as well as too slow. A man who offers himself to a woman before he has made sure of her affections, is very liable to receive No for an answer, when, with a little delay and assiduity combined, he might have made it Yes.

There is an instinctive pride in woman which makes her rebel against the idea of being too quickly and too easily won. She naturally thinks he must hold her love cheap who supposes it may be had by a comparative stranger for the mere asking. Even in the case of mutual love at first sight she does not willingly forego the pleasures of the delightful period of courtship. The wild bird woos his mate with long and mellifluous song; and woman feels it her right to exact an homage and adoration before, which she is not quite sure of after marriage.

Take time by the forelock, is an axiom which holds as good in love as in business; but it does not follow that you should ask a woman's hand before you are pretty certain you will obtain it.

SCIENCE.

EVIDENCE of the existence of mineral wealth of greater value and variety than has heretofore been supposed in the Chinese province of Shantung, has been obtained by Mr. A. A. Fauvel, of Chefoo, China. Beside the precious metals, which he is satisfied this part of the country produces, he has discovered rock-crystal, beryls, tourmalines, agates, amethysts, and heavy garnets of rich hues. He then sought for diamonds, and found them in that department of the province called Yichow. They range in size from a millet seed to a pin's head, though one has been obtained as large as a pea. The manner of gathering them is thus described: "Men with thick straw shoes on go walking about in the diamantiferous sands of the valleys and streams of the diamond mountains Chinkang-ling, some fifteen miles southeast of Yichowfu. The diamonds, which are ragged and pointed, penetrate the straw and remain there. The shoes are then collected in great numbers and burnt, the diamonds being searched for in the ashes." The report that diamond-fields existed in this region is now first verified.

There is a growing conviction of the importance of a more extended and thorough knowledge on the part of farmers concerning the life history and habits of those common insects which are hurtful to crops, as well as of those which are beneficial. To promote information of this kind, Mr. Carrington, an entomologist who is now the naturalist of the Westminster Aquarium, has proposed a plan by which the appearance and habits of various insects could be made familiar to the inhabitants of every agricultural district. Instead of trying to form numerous collections of preserved specimens, necessarily rather expensive, he would provide every village school with suitable glass cases in which the ordinary insects of the locality could be kept and fed, and watched through all their changes while alive. A very little instruction would render the schoolmaster competent to manage such an insectarium, as Mr. Carrington calls it, and his experiments with one during the past summer satisfy him that the plan is quite practicable.

From Germany it is announced that Professor Helmholtz, the eminent physicist, has been succeeded by Professor Zeller, as rector of the University of Berlin; and that Dr. O. Finsch, the director of the museum at Bremen, has resigned his office, and will shortly go to Australia for purposes of scientific exploration. From France comes news of the appointment of M. Fizeau, a distinguished investigator of the phenomena of light, to the position formally held by the late M. Leverrier in the Bureau of Longitudes. M. Fizeau is now president of the Paris Academy of Sciences. From the Alps,

Professor Du Bois Reymond has lately sent to Professor Tyndall the sad details of an accident to a party of mountain tourists on the Cevedale glacier, which cost the life of Dr. Sachs, a promising young physiologist, whose expedition to Venezuela to study the electric eel in its native haunts, was noticed last year.

The view that lightning prefers to strike the poplar rather than even higher trees near at hand has been advocated by Professor Colladon, and receives some confirmation from Geneva in a letter to "Nature" concerning a thunderbolt on the shore of the lake in August last. An aspen (*Populus tremula*) lower than the surrounding fir trees was struck by lightning, and its large upper branches conducted the electricity earthward without receiving the least damage, no part of the poplar being riddled until the trunk was reached. That, however, was badly shattered. "Other recent observations," says the article to which we have referred, "prove the preference of lightning for trees situated near streams or reservoirs of water, so that the best conductor for a house is a lofty tree—a poplar especially—situated between the house and a well, a pond, or a neighbouring stream."

The recent publication of a work on our Fenlands has to some extent renewed discussion concerning the origin of the buried forests in the fens. One writer declares he has known people to maintain that these forests grew and indeed are growing now underground just as geologists find them, while there are others who attribute to the deluge some influence in placing the trees in their present position. It is amazing to learn that the second of these absurd notions has actually been taught in the schools. The truth is, that it is doubtful whether the buried forests of the fens greatly ante-date the Roman invasion of Britain, though the authors of the work we have mentioned argue strongly for a much earlier origin. *

THE SURVIVORS;

OR,

John Grindem's Nephew.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE friendly struggle between Grindem and the three sailors was at once begun, with some noise and resolution.

At first Grindem seemed taken at a disadvantage, all three of his assailants clutching him at once, but he shook off their grasp—separated them—pinioned one of them as easily as if he had been a child—drew his arms behind him, and fastened them there with a running noose provided beforehand for that very service.

"There's one of you!" cried Grindem, laughing. "I shall win the victory."

It was equally in vain that Weedon tried to slip the noose which had been placed upon him, or that the other two sailors tried to escape similar treatment. In less time than it has taken to record the fact, both Shutter and Crossley lay prone beneath the burly frame of Grindem, and were being securely bound. At the end of another minute, the struggles of the three sailors had ceased, and Grindem arose to his feet—panting a little and considerably exhausted, but undeniably a victor.

"There you are, boys!" he cried jubilantly. "I thought I could do it. All three of you are prisoners—as powerless as babies! That little question is settled."

The words had scarcely been uttered, when the door of the hut was thrown open violently, and Albert Graham came bounding into the room with the air of a lion seeking its prey.

"I see that my work here is half done," he cried, waving his hand over the three helpless sailors. "It only remains for me to finish it."

It was in vain that Grindem recoiled, en-

deavouring to escape the battle by which he was threatened. In an instant Albert had hurled himself fiercely upon him.

The reader has of course realised the motives which had decided Albert Graham to make such a prompt attack upon Grindem.

Having overheard the entire plot of which he and his betrothed were the objects, Albert had comprehended that there could be no safety for her or for himself upon the island if Grindem and his allies were left at liberty. And having further seen that the three sailors were powerless under the bonds Grindem had playfully placed upon them, the present moment seemed a highly favourable occasion in which to get rid of an imminent and deadly peril.

At any rate Albert believed himself physically the superior of his cousin, and he had such faith in himself that he did not hesitate to stake his future weal upon an instant battle.

The moment Grindem found himself in the strong and resolute grasp thus put upon him, he struggled with the might of desperation, calling to his allies for assistance.

A grand uproar of voices at once responded, but these manifestations neither helped Grindem nor dissuaded Albert from his purpose. At the end of a struggle as savage as it was brief, Grindem was hurled violently to the floor, and the knees of our hero hugged the villain's chest so tightly that he could neither turn nor rise, while his breathing was entirely cut off by the stern hand which had clutched his throat.

"If you don't want to die the death of a dog, John Grindem," said Albert, with quiet determination, "you had better make no further resistance."

Grindem had every advantage of build and condition, and it did not seem to him possible that his assailant was already his master. He accordingly made one supreme effort of desperation, writhing like a snake upon the floor, but only to find that withering grasp upon his throat tightening at every effort.

The three sailors had now suspended their efforts to set themselves free and take part in the proceedings, and lay motionless and silent, a picture of wonder and terror.

Suddenly Grindem straightened himself out, his whole frame relaxing, and it was perfectly evident from his mien that he surrendered at discretion.

The hand upon his throat was accordingly loosened, allowing him to gasp convulsively for breath.

"I—I give in!" he panted.

"Then make me no trouble while I bind you," was Albert's stern injunction, as he proceeded to secure the hands of his prisoner behind him.

"Oh, I'm at your mercy," gasped Grindem, suddenly changing his tone from defiance to whining. "The boys winded me before your arrival. But why should we fight? What harm have I done to you, Mr. Graham? In a word, what is the meaning of your violence?"

"It means," replied Albert, arising to his feet, his work being now accomplished, "that I have overheard and witnessed all that has been said and done here during the last hour."

A blow of this sort is not easily parried. Grindem lay as if dumbfounded, at a loss what to say.

"You will all accordingly perceive," resumed Albert, "that I have the best of reasons for taking you into custody, and for putting you where you cannot do any mischief. You must permit me to take such measures for the night as I shall deem essential for my safety."

He lost no time in attaching every man to some of the timbers in the walls of the room, in such a way that they could not have possibly released themselves, but at the same time in such a way as put them to no pain nor to cause them any injury.

"I now leave you to your reflections, gentlemen," added Albert. "In the course of a few hours you may see me again."

And with this he took a torch in each hand from the blazing fire, and turned and left the dwelling.

In the course of twenty minutes he was again at the old navigator's cabin. Helen opened the door to him without delay, she having recognised him by his torchlight while he was still at a considerable distance.

"I am glad to welcome you back, dearest," said Helen, with a sigh of relief, returning the caresses with which he greeted her. "You stayed so long that we began to be uneasy about you."

"Yes, we began to fear for you," said Captain Tobias, "remembering the sort of man you had to deal with."

"I was delayed by a little adventure," explained Albert, as he threw the fragments of his torches into the fire.

"An adventure?" echoed the old navigator, as he scanned with a keen eye the young man's countenance. "You saw Grindem, then?"

"Yes, sir. The three sailors we were talking about to-day are with him!"

The fact was naturally so significant, given the circumstances, that the hearers received it with ejaculations of amazement.

"Yes, they are at the new hut," continued Albert. "They landed in Chatham Bay, as you did, Helen, and took their way towards Grindem's, instead of coming in this direction."

The faces of Captain Tobias and Helen had become decidedly grave at these revelations.

"I can see that trouble is at hand," said our heroine. "I have already referred to the good relations between Grindem and these men, and haven't the least doubt of their prompt arrival at a villanous understanding."

"Your view of the case is perfectly correct, dearest," said Albert. "The four men are formally united for our destruction. They would all have been here before now, pouncing upon us without ceremony, had it not been for the state of extreme exhaustion in which the three sailors find themselves in consequence of their long exposure and starvation. You will be amused to hear now, upon my arrival at the hut, I detected the presence of these men, how I listened to their conversation as they lingered over their supper, and how they unwittingly unveiled to my gaze their whole vile intention!"

"Of course, the rascals are after the pirate-treasure?" queried Captain Tobias.

"Yes, sir, and Grindem is still more earnestly resolute upon seizing Helen," announced Albert, drawing the girl to his side with an energy which attested that he would protect her to his last breath of life. "The whole project was discussed before me, and to-morrow evening is the time fixed for their onslaught upon us!"

"Thank Heaven it is no sooner!" exclaimed Captain Tobias. "Before to-morrow night we can embark with our effects in the whale-boat, if that step should appear absolutely necessary."

"True, we can embark if the weather should be fine," assented Albert. "But suppose we should have a horrible tempest—and such a state of things is quite possible at this season—to embark in such an emergency as that would simply be madness."

"I'd sooner be swallowed up in the sea with you, dear Albert," murmured Helen, "than fall into the hands of that terrible Grindem."

"Well, happily the alternative is not likely to be forced upon us," said Albert, laughing at the recollection of his battle, as he dropped into a chair. "The four men are bound hand and foot at this moment, and as powerless to help themselves as if inclosed in their coffins."

The amazement of the victor's hearers at this information was inexpressible.

"You will laugh, as I do, when I tell you how singularly it all happened," reported Albert. "It seems that Grindem did not feel very sure of his allies, on account of their weak state, and he expressed the belief that he could handle all three of them. Sure enough, when issue had been duly joined, he had no great difficulty in

securing them, and binding them one after another. The moment that was done I realised that I had only to secure Grindem to remain master of the situation. The temptation was too good to be resisted. I at once burst in upon the astonished men, and after a brief struggle with Grindem had him at my mercy."

He proceeded to give in detail the various facts in the case, as they are known to the reader.

It can readily be imagined what astonishment these revelations caused Helen and Captain Tobias. The latter shook hands with our hero a full quarter of a minute in silence.

"I'd no idea of your possessing such pluck and promptness, Albert," he exclaimed. "Had you, Helen?"

"Oh, certainly," cried our heroine, with a face that was roseate with the love and admiration the exploits of her betrothed had aroused in her soul. "But I doubtless know him better than you do. I think the way he treated those wicked men is just like him."

The old navigator laughed heartily. In good truth he was greatly pleased with the relief Albert had thus given to the whole situation.

"I see that you have acted nobly, boy," he commented.

"It was the only course I could take, sir. If a storm should rage now we can wait for fine weather, keeping these ruffians in close confinement as long as we please. If you think best we will transfer them all to the pirate cave in the morning, and hold them as prisoners until we have decided upon our course of action."

"We'll do that very thing."

This step was accordingly taken at an early hour of the following morning, despite the curses and threats with which Grindem and his allies opposed it. The prisoners were all duly fed and bedded, after being secured to the stout staples in the walls of their rocky prison, and then they were again left to their reflections.

"A fine state of things," groaned Grindem, the first to speak, when Albert and his friends had retreated. "What a horrible reverse for us!"

He raved like a madman.

"But must we endure it?" asked Shutter, in a voice so hoarse and husky that it resembled the growl of a wild beast. "Can't we break these rusty old chains, or loosen one of these staples?"

"Oh, if we could," breathed Weedon.

For a few minutes nought was heard but the clanking of chains and the mutterings of frightful oaths, as the four prisoners made thorough examination of their surroundings.

"It is of no use, it seems," groaned Grindem, sinking down in despair. "We are anchored beyond all danger of drifting."

His allies did not fail to arrive promptly at the same conclusion.

"And what would become of us if Graham should wilfully abandon us, or for any other reason fail to come back?" asked Crossley. "I shudder at the thought."

"How horribly cold it is!" exclaimed Weedon. "We are in a living grave."

"Our coffin will soon be warmer—as soon as the green wood gets dry," declared Shutter. "Meanwhile—"

He paused suddenly, regarding with a strange intensity a sort of streak of fire which had suddenly crept out towards him from the huge blaze Albert had lighted in the middle of the rocky cavern.

"What is that?" demanded the wondering prisoner, in a voice husky with terror.

"What's what?" queried Grindem.

"Don't you see that a streak of fire is coming this way—directly towards me?" demanded Weedon.

"I see! I see!" cried Grindem, in a tone of interest that at once fixed the attention of his allies. "At some former time some barrels of tar have been burned here to increase the heat of the fire, or to get rid of them. This tar has run down into the corner where you are, Weedon.

There is a regular river of it over the floor. The fire has now caught in this river of pitch, and is blazing up in a flame that will soon reach you."

"Such was indeed the fact, at least in substance.

For a moment the air was rent with cries of consternation, and then the voice of Weedin rose authoritatively above the others.

"Don't let us make idiots of ourselves," he muttered. "It looks to me as if the demon were helping us! If the fire comes within three yards of the spot I now occupy, I shall be able to free myself!"

"Free yourself!" cried Grindem, turning deathly pale with the revulsion of feeling that suggestion caused him. "What do you mean, Weedin?"

"I mean that my legs are bound only with ropes," exclaimed Weedin, "most of the old chains and padlocks being too rusty for use. If the fire should follow the seams of pitch in this direction—"

"It is certainly doing so!" cried Grindem, appearing half delirious with joy.

"In that case my feet will soon be free, and then my hands," declared Weedin, who was now pale as a sheet with his emotions. "And once I am free—"

He finished with a glare outward from the cave of the most murderous fury.

"Yes, to be sure," said Grindem. "If you can once free yourself, you'll soon have the rest of us loose."

"And the fire is really extending itself this way. It is sure to reach me! Oh, what joy for us! What rare fortune!"

The overjoyed villain was right!

In less than half an hour the stream of fire, following the streak of pitch, had come so near to Weedin that he could burn off his ropes. Within ten minutes thereafter he had also freed his hands. To then pound loose his companions with a huge bolt of iron was the work of less than an hour.

The demon-like and venomous joy with which they all rushed forth in quest of their intended victims can be readily imagined. But they had reached the limits of their successes. When they arrived at Wafer Bay, and plunged down upon the old navigator's cabin, intent upon murder, they found Albert and his friends gone. Barely a mile off shore, safe in their staunch whale-boat, they were sailing rapidly away in the direction of the coast Guatemala.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE hour was near midnight, and everybody was asleep in the palatial residence of John Grindem, Cannon Street, London—or supposed to be asleep—when the silence was suddenly broken by the most startling cries and shouts, proceeding from one of the chambers on the second floor.

The author of this uproar was the merchant's youngest son, Roland Grindem, a callow youth of some eighteen years.

"If there isn't that boy again!" exclaimed Mrs. Grindem, starting up in bed and rubbing her eyes, while she shook the merchant violently. "He's having another of his spells."

Leaping from their bed, the couple struck a light and hurried in the direction of their son's apartment, which they reached in due course, while the uproar continued, and hastily opened the door.

"Millicent, do look here!" cried the merchant, waving aloft his light. "Isn't that a spectacle?"

In the centre of the room stood Roland Grindem, with glaring eyes and terrible mien, clutching a pillow in one hand and a boot in the other, and in the act of waging the most desperate war upon—what?

Nothing whatever was visible.

So busy was Roland with his offensive and defensive measures, and with his consequent gyrations and other gymnastic exercises, that he did not at first seem to recognise his parents, but to deem them a part and parcel of a nightmare, for

he made as lively a dash at them as if intent on their instant destruction.

"Stop, boy, stop!" yelled the merchant, changing his base with surprising celerity. "Don't come at me in that fashion. What on earth ails you? Don't you know your own father and mother?"

The voice of the merchant seemed to dissipate the spell. The boy dropped the boot, threw the pillow upon the bed in one corner, and rubbed his eyes vigorously.

"There's a man in the house!" he shouted, still glaring around sharply, although he seemed to recognise the merchant and Mrs. Grindem perfectly. "I saw him slip out of the orchard and creep up under the window. He had a ladder in his left hand and a knife in his right. He came up the ladder—raised the window—crept to the bed—"

The youth was obliged to suspend revelations and recover breath a little.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the merchant. "There has been no man here. You have been dreaming again, or had a fit—Heaven knows what!"

Mrs. Grindem stood looking around, silently wringing her hands.

"But I tell you I saw him!" protested Roland, still a picture of bewilderment and agitation. "He came in the window. He meant to kill me. I had all I could do to prevent him from running his knife through me. Why, see for yourself."

The youth struck a tragic air, wiping a streak of blood from one of his cheeks, and pointed twice rapidly, first at the window, and then at the mirror.

Here was, indeed, evidence of a savage and destructive presence. Both the window and the mirror had been dashed in pieces, and the fragments strewed the floor.

The sarcastic smile of the merchant was even more an expression of his amusement than of his astonishment.

"True there has been a great battle going on here, young man," he declared, as he held up his light to the glassless frame; "but you've had it all to yourself. You've been dreaming. Here are the marks of your bootheels on the frame, and you hit so hard that you have even pounded the heel off your boot. See for yourself."

Roland took one grand look at the evidence of these facts, and then looked about as foolish as an idiot.

"It—it can't be possible!" he stammered.

"See for yourself, I say," returned the merchant, waving his light.

"But I saw the man as plain as I see you at this moment, father," protested Roland, earnestly. "And I was just as wide awake as I am now, or as I ever was in my life."

"It's easy to see who did this mischief," said the merchant, becoming serious again, as he examined the ruins. "Besides, it has been only three or four nights since you had just such a fight as this."

The son was naturally overwhelmed with further confusion by these observations. Mrs. Grindem sighed deeply, continuing to wring her hands.

"I must say, Roland, I think we have had about enough of this midnight revelry," pursued the merchant. "It is high time to do something about it. Remain here with him, Millicent. I am going for the doctor."

The merchant lost no time in dressing himself and in acting upon this resolution. Ten minutes later he came back followed by the family physician.

"Such are the exact facts, Dr. Gray," assured the merchant, finishing the report with which he had beguiled the way, "and here are the evidences."

Dr. Gray felt Roland's pulse, looked at his tongue, examined his eyes and complexion, and then dropped into the nearest chair.

"Isn't this the young man who graduated with such high honours a few weeks ago?" he asked. "The youth who took the very foremost place in everything—arithmetic, history, geography, algebra, Latin, French, and German?"

"The very boy," replied the merchant, proudly.

"Well, the simple fact in his case is, that he has been over-worked, over-studied, and under-exercised," declared the physician, with a bluntness partaking of impatience. "He's in a fair way to become crazier than bedlam. I thought you had more sense, Mr. Grindem, than to allow the lad's brains to run away with his body. Can't you see for yourselves what ails him? He's as thin as a ghost, and his blood's nothing but water. Books have well nigh been his destruction. Can't you see that his whole nervous system is over-wrought? He's as much out of his proper self at this moment as if he were suffering with delirium tremens. I never saw a boy of his age and of his natural stamina in such poor condition. What have you both been about during the last few months? Where have your eyes been? But I comprehend the whole matter. The boy's success at school, and the talk he has made, have puffed you up with pride, and you have paid little heed to what his triumphs have cost. What have you been about, Roland, since you graduated?"

"I have been clerking a little in the warehouse—"

"Worse and worse," interrupted Dr. Gray, arising and buttoning his coat. "The boy's situation is critical, Mr. Grindem. I shall leave him no medicine, for he wants no drugs whatever. What he does need can be briefly stated. He wants plenty of exercise out of doors, plenty of sunshine, plenty of good beef and bread. Don't let him touch a book, or even a newspaper, for two years. Better still, let him take a long sea voyage. Let him go to China. You have always had plenty of seafaring friends, Mr. Grindem, and can send the young man to sea with the best of care and surroundings. This is the only way in which you can get that 'man in the house' out of his head; the only way, I assure you on my professional honour, in which you can save him from death or madness!"

And with this the blunt old physician departed as abruptly as he had come, leaving a perfect blankness of consternation behind him.

For several minutes not a word was spoken. Roland Grindem had slunk off to bed. Mrs. Grindem sat silent and thoughtful, still mechanically wringing her hands. The merchant was pacing wearily to and fro, with a look of the deepest inquiet upon his features.

"The thought is freezing my soul, John," finally murmured Mrs. Grindem, "that we have made a great mistake in almost everything, and especially in bringing up our children. What is now left of all the hopes with which we saw them clustering around us? Our eldest, our first-born, who bears your name—"

"Name him not, the rascal, the worthless villain!" interrupted the merchant, hotly. "We shall have no more trouble with him. We know that he took passage in the 'Messenger,' under the name of Baker, after his defalcations and other infamies, and that is the end of him. The brig has never been seen or reported; she has no doubt gone to the bottom."

"And yet you once had great hopes of the son you are now anathematising," said Mrs. Grindem. "We looked to him as the one great joy of our existence."

"Well, is it any fault of mine that he has turned out bad?" demanded the merchant, savagely. "Was it my fault that he dishonoured our name?"

"I fear it was, John," answered Mrs. Grindem, with humble boldness. "The boy must have seen that you were a living falsehood, and his perceptions, not only of right, but of retribution, must have become blunted by your example. As to our daughter, you not only refused her the man of her choice, but you ruined that man and drove him to an insane asylum, and she sleeps in her grave. To crown all the tragedies of our household, Roland is on the verge of madness—and so am I. Oh, John, a blight is surely resting upon us."

"Nonsense, Millicent. Don't be foolish! Troubles come to everybody."

"But I cannot help thinking of all the long line of victims that crowd our pathway," proceeded Mrs. Grindem, in a hollow and agonised voice. "At this dark hour, I cannot help remembering poor Captain Tobias, whom you so cruelly thrust forth to die upon a desert island, seizing his money!"

"In Heaven's name, Millicent—"

"I fear it is too late to invoke the name of Heaven, John," resumed Mrs. Grindem, rocking her lean and angular body to and fro. "I remember your sister Mary, and her husband, who went down in poverty and suffering to the grave, when the sacrifice of a very small portion of your accumulations—I will not say of your wealth—would have doubtless saved them. I think especially of their boy, of their only son, Albert Graham, who applied to you for a place to earn an honest living, and whom you rejected. Even then the curse that rests upon us might have been averted. But now—now, John, I fear it is too late!"

"To what use is all this reference to the past, Millicent?" asked John Grindem, pale and agitated, as he quickened his pace. "Granted that I have made mistakes—and no man can pretend to perfection—of what earthly use is it to sit down here and howl about what happened so long ago? Granted that I have been harsh and cruel, too eager to obtain money, too much bound up in my business projects; have any of the men around us been living the lives of saints? Let us be reasonable, Millicent. It is sheer insanity for you to be distressing yourself about Captain Tobias and all those other phantoms of the past which, of course, you only comprehend very imperfectly. I am not so bad as you are sometimes inclined to paint me in your moments of gloom and dejection. Let us talk particularly about the trouble in hand. What are we to do with Roland?"

"He must, of course, have the change of air and scene recommended by Dr. Gray," said Mrs. Grindem. "And yet I shrink from sending him to sea," and she shuddered. "Something tells me that the sea will yet visit a fateful retribution upon us."

The merchant muttered an oath of angry impatience, and tore his hands fiercely through his hair.

"You will certainly drive me distracted, Millicent," he cried. "I'd sooner be a dog than listen for ever to these prognostications of woe and disaster. It seems to me a very simple thing to send the boy off for a cruise with some sea-going friend."

"Why couldn't we go with him?"

"What! and leave my vast business to go to the dogs?"

"You will have to leave it sooner or later, John. You seem to act as if you expected to live for ever. And yet you are past sixty."

"Well, what of it?" and the merchant expanded his chest proudly, drawing a long breath. "I feel as young as ever, and am good for twenty years, at least. Besides, just now is harvest-time with me. During the next few years I shall reap the grand harvest I have sown."

(To be Continued.)

THE SECRET OF SOAP AND WATER.

HITHERTO no satisfactory reason has been given why for cleansing purposes the comparatively neutral soap should be better than the alkaline carbonate. In a note on the pedetic action of soap, Professor W. Stanley Jevons offers a plausible solution of the mystery. He finds by experiment that pedesis, or the so-called Brownian movement of microscopic particles, is considerably increased by the addition of soap to water, and to this action he attributes the detergent effect of soap.

Pure rain or distilled water has a high cleansing power, because it produces pedesis in a high degree, the minute particles of dirt being thereby loosened and washed away. The hardness of impure water arises from the vast decrease of

pedesis due to the salts in solution; hence the inferior cleansing power of such water. If alkaline salts be added, dissolved in the water, it becomes capable of acting upon oleaginous matter, but the pedetic action is lessened, not increased. But if soap be added we have the advantage both of the alkali's dissolving power and the pedetic cleansing power.

For the same reason silicate of soda is a powerful cleanser, it being one of the few substances which increase the pedetic and suspensive power of water.

BOUND TO THE TRAWL.

By the Author of "Clitic Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl," "Poor Loo," etc.

CHAPTER XLII.

KATIE'S RING.

Yellow's forsaken and green's forsworn,
But blue is the truest and ought to be worn.

For a moment the two men seemed to glare at each other, then Colonel Chartres imperiously demanded:

"Why do you haunt and dog the steps of that innocent girl?"

"I—who?" asked Fretwell with a start, then seeing Katie, of whose proximity he was till then unconscious, his pale face flushed and he stammered: "I beg your pardon. I didn't know," and turned to retrace his steps.

"Stay, I have a few words to say to you," observed the Colonel, a trifle less sternly, and the two walked on slowly together.

What passed between them was never entirely repeated to Katie; but they seemed to talk a long time, Fretwell in a deprecatory manner at first, then with something of pride and dignity, and at last, could Katie believe her own eyes? the kind-hearted but proud old colonel was actually shaking hands with the man who, not thirty hours ago, had insulted her by proposing that she should run away with him, while his wife was still living.

Some of her indignation flashed from her eyes as Basil's father approached her; he saw it and said in a tone of apology:

"You are surprised at my parting as a friend from that man? He repents of his conduct to you, and has risked his life to atone for it and save your name from a breath of slander."

"His life!" gasped the girl; "how? I don't understand."

"I can't enter into details; the poor woman was mad without a doubt. She wrote a letter which the girl Lettie secreted, thinking it might hurt or injure you. It is the only positive proof that the woman committed suicide, and many ugly whispers are about that her husband returned to the house and killed her; but reckless of consequences to himself, he has burnt unread, the letter that would have proved his innocence."

"Oh, why did he do it?" asked the girl, in dismay. "They may put him in prison, they may even hang him; it is too dreadful!"

"It was the only atonement he could make, and he has behaved nobly in making it. You don't wonder now at my giving him my hand?"

"No," faintly; "but," she added a little later, "I am beginning to think there is something unlucky about me. Wherever I go, I seem the cause indirectly of some crime or misfortune. If Basil and George Crabtree had not had a fight over me years ago I don't believe you would have lost your son, and if I hadn't come here, perhaps that woman and her poor baby might still have been alive. I had better go back to my own people."

"You didn't make the woman mad, my dear. I don't think you can reproach yourself about her in any way; and for my poor boy, a mightier hand than yours or mine has snatched him from me; but I was going to suggest that you should

go to Great Barmouth and stay with your aunt for a time. I should have liked you to accompany us to the Continent, but I can't conveniently manage it. I must make other arrangements when I return to England. I am thinking of taking a house and getting some widow lady to look after it, then you and Minnie could come and live with me as my two daughters. By the way, do you know anything of any of your father's family?"

"No, sir; I believe uncle did receive a letter from one of them many years ago, offering to adopt me if he would promise never to see me again, but whether it was answered or not I cannot say; Auntie was in a great rage over it, and, for months after, I used to dream that some wicked people were coming to kidnap me."

"Not much wisdom shown on either side, I fear," was the answering remark. "But I must be off. There is to be an inquest held upon that poor fellow to-day. I wouldn't go out alone much, if I were you, that miscreant Crabtree may be about; the police have not caught him yet. I will see you to-morrow. Good-bye, my dear."

And Katie was left alone at the door of the habitation that she called home, where even her landlady played the part of spy upon her.

What wonder that she longed for the scenes of her childhood, for the kind, homely faces that had always a smile of love upon them for her, and that when the next day a letter reached her from her aunt urging her to come and see them, if only for a short time, she accepted the invitation most gladly. Of course she did not know that a telegram from Colonel Chartres had instigated this letter, nor was there any necessity for her doing so.

Anxious as she was to get away from the house where she began to feel restless and uncomfortable, Katie felt that it would be dislikeable and prudent to remain until the inquest upon Mrs. Fretwell and her child was over, so that if any question should arise as to herself she might be on the spot to answer it.

And she was right. But despite the suspicious whispers that were breathed against Mr. Fretwell, the purchase of the poison by his wife was proved, while the position of the wound on her own neck satisfied the surgeon that it had been self-inflicted.

The condition of the mind of the deceased, however, troubled one of the jurymen.

He was not sure she was mad; he would like further evidence on that point; he had heard that one of the teachers had been compelled to leave through Mrs. Fretwell's violent behaviour. He would like that young teacher to be examined.

So poor Katie was called, trembling, becoming red and pale, hot and cold, by turns. But she had nothing to say against the dead woman, except that they had always been on very distant terms, as Mrs. Fretwell didn't seem to like her. They never met out of the school-room, except on one occasion, about six weeks after the birth of the baby, when as a matter of politeness she had called.

"Was she quiet and civil then?" asked the coroner.

"No, she snatched the child out of my arms and said I wanted to steal it. She was very violent, and I left the house and determined to resign my situation. I never saw her afterwards."

"Nor her husband?"

"I met him once by accident."

"Did you ever receive a letter from either of them?"

"Never."

Here a jurymen whose business required his presence interposed, saying that it was quite unnecessary to pursue that topic.

The coroner acquiesced, old Sue, who had been as malicious as possible during the whole affair, as though in revenge for the blame which from all sides had been cast upon her, made some muttered remarks about "writing," but no one heeded her, the jury consulted together, and a verdict of "Temporary Insanity" was returned. "Free!" muttered Frederick Fretwell, draw-

ing a deep breath; "free! and without compromising her."

But though Katie was not compromised, her nerves were shaken.

Colonel Chartres and Minnie took her back to the Willows with them. It was to be her last visit there for some time, for she was to start for Great Barmouth the next day, while the Garlands, with their uncle, would leave for the Continent on the succeeding morning.

"Let us sit under the willows, Katie; take your hat off, and the wind will cool your face and head. I expect Percy Rossburn will return with George to dinner, he promised to bring him—if he could."

So Minnie rattled on, though Percy's name was not calculated to make Katie's cheeks cooler or her heart feel less restless and excited.

Colonel Chartres had gone to town immediately after escorting the two girls to The Willows, for he had orders to give concerning the funeral of poor Teddy Dale; to take counsel with one of the chiefs of police, and to arrange for giving up his chambers, to which he had taken an intense dislike.

A verdict of "Wilful Murder" against some person or persons unknown, had been the decision of the coroner's jury upon the body of Captain Growler's runaway apprentice; but though no name was mentioned, the police expressed themselves very positive as to whom they suspected of being the murderer, though they had not yet succeeded in finding him.

This had been a busy day for the colonel, but nevertheless he found time to drive up to Bond Street to purchase a present for Katie before she went away.

"I must get one for Minnie too," he thought; "she is a dear, good girl—unlike her sister. What shall I buy? Ah, there is Percy, he can help me."

And he somewhat astonished his nephew, who had just come out of a club in St. James's Street, by hailing him.

"Just the man I want," said the soldier, taking his nephew's arm. "What would a girl like best for a present in the way of jewellery, do you think?"

"Well, it depends upon whether she most values the giver or the gift, was the reply.

"It is for Katie. I shall get something for Minnie too. Now you can judge," said the colonel, tersely.

"Then I should say a ring; you can spend little or much upon it as you choose. Girls who have pretty hands always like rings. I rather admire those triple rings; the three rows take away any notion of singularity."

"Very well; come in and we will choose a couple," and the two men entered the shop.

They were not easily satisfied, but at last two rings were selected, the cost of which would have astonished both girls not a little.

Three half hoops of precious stones, forming a single ring in each case. In the one ring there was a row of diamonds, sapphires and rubies; in the other emeralds took the place of sapphires.

"I suppose I had better let them take their choice?" said the elder man, but Percy replied, hastily:

"Oh, no, Katie must have the sapphires, that is," he added, with a slight flush, "if I were giving a ring to her I should say so."

"Then she shall have that one." Then after a pause, he said, abruptly: "I wish I was a few years younger, I'd offer her a very much plainer ring than this."

Percy made no reply, as he turned sharply away, but a tell-tale looking glass told his relative that his face was flushed. After all, the young barrister was not very much unlike a dog in a manger, driving away others, yet not partaking of the food himself.

"Are you coming back to dinner with me?" asked his uncle, as he re-entered his cab.

"No, thank you, I am engaged."

So they parted, and Percy, through no intention on his uncle's part, was left in ignorance that Katie Jessop was going away, still less did he know that her destination was Great Barmouth.

Of course, the girls were delighted with their rings, while Amy was yellow with envy and jealousy; but I am afraid Katie would have prized hers more dearly had she known that Percy Rossburn, instead of the dear old colonel, had selected it, and she might have slept more contentedly than she did that night, had she known that no one had told Percy she was at the Willows, and this omission was the only reason why he had not come.

As it was, she cried herself to sleep. She was leaving what she could never hope to possess. Going back to the old dead life, more wearisome now by contrast than ever, with a pain in her heart that will not leave her.

"And I may never see him again," she moans. "Oh, why was I born; what have I done to be so miserable?"

Foolish girl, mourning thus with the ring on her finger that Percy Rossburn feels he has given her, forgetful of the trifling fact that his uncle had written the cheque for it. But he had selected it, it was his choice, and, if the cost were not so great, so would be the wearer.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE HON. MRS. TEMPLEMORE VISITS KATIE.

Time speeds away, away, away;
No eagle through the tide of day;
No wind along the hills can flee
More swiftly or more smoothly than he.

FIVE years have elapsed since the events recorded in my last chapter, and Katie Jessop still wears the triple ring of diamonds, sapphires and rubies on the fourth finger of her left hand, but no plain circlet of gold gleams beside it.

She is three and twenty now, and if she has lost some of the girlishness that was so fresh and winning, the more matured charms and added dignity of early womanhood which she has attained amply compensate her.

Outwardly calm and pleasant as this period of her life has been, Katie Jessop can yet look back upon it as a time of pain, labour and struggle; a conflict that has come day after day, week after week, and month after month as surely as the sun has risen upon the earth; a fight against weakness, love, and indolence that still unceasingly continues.

How often Percy Rossburn has been saved from "committing himself to a proposal of matrimony" it would be difficult to say, for the saving hand has more often than not been that of Katie herself, but, though she does not now doubt his love for her, she knows there is a lingering reluctance in his mind. This she sees clearly and unmistakably; his heart drags one way, his ambition another, and with men who have much left in the world to win, the latter is more than likely to become triumphant.

But Katie is lovely enough to drive all ideas of prudence out of the head of any man, and Colonel Chartres has long since made Percy understand that the girl will not be wanting in wealth when she gives her hand to a husband.

It is her birth that stands like a spectre before the young barrister. The niece of a fisherman to be his wife, when—he knows it well and without vanity—a daughter of an earl would very willingly take her place by his side through life.

Knowing all this, Katie has been particularly careful to keep certain things from Percy's knowledge.

"If he marries me he shall do so because he loves me, not because my father's family is equal to his own, and some of my relatives choose to acknowledge me," she had often said to herself, and implied as much to Colonel Chartres, and thus Percy had not known that any change had taken place in her circumstances or position in life.

The plan of living alone which Katie had tried in the house of old Sue's daughter, she never attempted again.

Nominally her home is with her aunt Meg,

now Mrs. George Crabtree, in Great Barmouth, where a couple of rooms are set aside for her sole use, but considerably more than half of her time she is away from this place on long visits.

Colonel Chartres had not carried out his intention of taking a house of his own where the two girls could live with him, for on being looked at more closely, the plan was found impracticable.

Beyond this, the cause for it no longer existed. Amy Garland, whose dislike for Katie had been so marked, was not married, but what was the next best thing to it, she was the inmate of another house than that in which her family lived.

Discontented, jealous, overbearing and exacting, she had quarrelled even with her mother, and as Mrs. Fothergill, her aunt, who had no daughters of her own, took the girl's part, Amy transferred the doubtful blessing of her society to the house of her more distant relations, a compliment which they would soon gladly have evaded if they had quite known how.

Here however the girl was too clever for them. The Fothergills never stayed long in any one place, they were always travelling about, which just suited Miss Garland, and as, while she was out of the house the colonel had no objection to make her a liberal allowance for dress and pocket money, she found this kind of life much more to her taste than staying to be "moped to death," as she termed it, at The Willows.

Thus the house on the bank of the Thames became a much more pleasant home for the soldier now his *bête noir* was gone, and Katie often came on long visits, while Mrs. Garland, who still hoped she would marry George, began to regard and treat her almost as a daughter.

Many of Katie's dreams had been realised in the course of these five years.

She had travelled, and observed, and used much that she had thus learned in her work, thereby enriching and giving vigour to it.

But though her name is known Katie is by no means what may be called a very successful authoress. True, she sells her work as fast as she can finish it, but she has not had the exceptional good fortune to wake up one morning and find herself famous, as one reads of in books, but that so seldom happens in real life.

Something else that the world would have thought more important than literary fame had come to her, however.

One day, about a year after Katie's first return to Great Barmouth, a handsome carriage and pair stopped before the house of Mr. George Crabtree, sail and rope maker, and a footman in showy livery walked up to the front door and hammered at it with the knocker as though he had a spite against all things iron or wooden, and meant to let them feel the force of his ill-will.

But Meg Crabtree had not changed her disposition or her temper with her name, and she opened the door sharply and said in an irritable tone:

"Well, young man; don't you know no better than to bang holes through the doors of honest folk's houses?"

The man desisted; looked at Meg for a moment in amazement, then not deigning a reply to her question asked:

"Does Miss Jessop live here?"

"Yes, Miss Jessop does live here," shrewishly.

"Is she at home?"

"Yes, she is at home, but I don't 'spose she'll see you."

"Tell her a lady wants to see her," and the man returned to the carriage, he had been desired not to give any name.

"Hoighty! toighty! Some of Katie's fine friends, I'll be bound; p'raps the old colonel asked them to come. Here, you Martha," to the servant, "you stand here and show the folks into the best parlour, while I go and tell Miss Katie, and mind you behave yourself and do it proper," with which Meg, who had on her morning dress, made herself scarce.

A lady descended from the carriage; she was middle-aged, tall, stately, and grey, with a look



[KATIE'S RELATIONS.]

of care and suffering upon her face that seemed to add greatly to the number of her years.

And yet she was handsome; nay, once she might have been beautiful, and as she came up the small garden with its trimly-kept path, Martha involuntarily said:

"How like she be to Miss Katie."

Somewhat awed by the lady's appearance and manner, Martha ushered her into the drawing-room, which, thanks to Katie's taste, was very different to the best room in the houses of most people of that class, and asked the stranger what name she should say.

"Ah, yes," was the reply, and she handed the girl a card, upon which was engraved the name of "The Honourable Mrs. Templemere."

When Katie saw this name her face flushed, then paled again, for Colonel Chartres' question about her father's family had made her inquire into the matter, hunt up the name, pedigree and connections of the stock whence she came; she guessed pretty accurately who this grand lady was, who had so tardily remembered her existence.

Declining to follow her aunt's suggestion that she should change her plain white morning dress for a silk one, Katie at once went to the drawing-room where the strange lady was seated, with a book in her hand which she instantly recognised as being a work of her own production.

Mrs. Templemere rose, looked at the girl critically for a second or two, and then extending her hand said gravely, while a sad smile just warmed her face:

"You are Katie Jessop?"

"Yes," was the timid reply.

"And do you recognise my name? Do you know who I am?" was the next question.

"I think so," said the girl, tremulously. "You were my father's sister, were you not?"

"Yes, my name was Katie Jessop long before you were born. It was seeing it in print on this title page that startled me into remembering and raking up the past. Then it came

back to my mind that my favourite brother, whose marriage and death nearly broke my heart, had left a child behind him, and I made inquiries which have resulted in my being here. You don't resent my not having sought you out before, I hope?"

"No. Why should I? Some of my father's family did offer to adopt me when I was very young, I believe, but my uncle refused to bind himself to abide by the conditions suggested, and I think he was right."

"You do?" asked the lady, a trifle sternly.

"Yes," was the unflinching reply.

"Then you want nothing from me?" in a tone of surprise.

"Nothing, except your friendship. I shall be glad of that," replied Katie, with a sweet smile. "I should like to know some of the people whose name I bear, and to whom I belong, and I should like those who loved my father to care a little for me; that is only natural I suppose, madame."

"I am your aunt," said Mrs. Templemere, annoyed at having failed to overcome the girl she had come to patronise, "and I come to offer you a home with me, free of conditions. What do you say? Will you accept it?"

"I shall be very glad to come and pay you a long visit, and to know you better, and, I hope, love you; but I cannot entirely leave those who have been so kind and affectionate to me all my life; and, besides, I have friends in London with whom I always spend a few months, and beyond this," with a defiant little smile, "I have my work to do. I have not been brought up as an idle lady, and I could scarcely adapt myself to such a life now."

"Then you will not come and live with me?"

"Not entirely; but I will come and stay a month or two with you whenever you will have me."

"Very well," with a sigh; "I suppose I must not expect more. If I send the carriage for you to-morrow will you be ready?"

A quick assent, a warm embrace, and then Mrs. Templemere went away, and Katie sat

down and tried to realise the change that this unexpected visit might work in her life.

But her recognition by her father's family came too late to make any great or palpable difference to her; before poor Basil's mysterious disappearance she might have become absorbed and completely taken possession of by her new found relatives; now, they were simply a widening out of her social circle and experience, while they in turn were surprised at the child of a fisherman's daughter being so refined and gentle a lady.

"She resembles her father, and reminds me of what I was at her age," remarked Mrs. Templemere to her husband; and having made this assertion, no further explanation was, in this lady's opinion, necessary.

Beyond being thus accepted by the wide-spreading family of the Jessops, married and otherwise, nothing very eventful has occurred to my heroine during the five years that have elapsed.

The cruel murderer of little Charley Crisp and poor Teddy Dale has never been found. The police have had many clues to his hiding place, but have never succeeded in unearthing their prey, for the very good reason that he was already in gaol.

Down in Cornwall, under the alias of John Smith, he had been arrested for theft and sent to prison.

His next offence was for highway robbery with violence, and for this he was sentenced to penal servitude, but though his time has not yet expired, he will be at large with a ticket of leave very shortly, and then he promises himself a visit to his affectionate uncle, and also he has determined that he will seek pretty Katie Jessop, and find out if she remembers him, and also, if possible, what has become of Basil Rossburn, for more than once of late years he has doubted if he is really dead.

If not dead, however, he must have been hidden very securely for neither friend nor foe to be able to find him.

(To be Continued.)



[WIDOWED.]

"MY LOVE IS LIKE A RED, RED ROSE."

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Sinned Against: Not Sinning," &c.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Oh! why should the spirit of mortal be proud?
Like a fast-fitting meteor, a fast-flying cloud,
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,
He passes from life to his rest in the grave. KNOX.

THE café outside which this drunken broil occurs is a place somewhat similar to the cafés chantants of Paris. Similar, save that broils and quarrels are more frequent and that private pique and jealousy have much to do with the disturbances.

Clement Woodleigh is perfectly aware of this; and would therefore have quietly passed by on the other side, but for the sudden appearance of Muriel upon the scene.

He is unfeignedly astonished to see her, the more so as she is attired in a strange sort of fanciful dress, half Spanish, half Gitana-like. She wears a short, fantastic, low-necked, short-sleeved robe of some gay crimson and gold material, a guitar is slung at her back by a broad crimson sash; and her long, fair flowing hair is surmounted by a mock golden crown.

Muriel does not at first see Clement Woodleigh, who is hustled hither and thither by the crowd which has gathered around.

"What is the matter?" he inquires from a couple of English sailors who are standing by.

"Some one of them 'ere Spanish chaps made too free use of the name of the Gipsy Queen of Song," is the reply; "and it seems her husband, who is a gipsy, heard it and attempted to stab him, and the Spanish chap he give him a stab with a dagger that has settled his business."

"You don't mean to say there has been a man killed!" exclaims Clement Woodleigh, in horror.

"Seems like it," replies the other sailor, strolling away. "Good-looking gal the Gipsy Queen of Song is."

Clement Woodleigh makes his way through the crowd. It is no easy matter to do so, for to a man and woman they are all half drunk, and are pressing forward to the bench whereon the dying man lies, his wife standing beside him. A man is trying to staunch the blood which flows from a wound in his side, otherwise no one seems to take any trouble to try and stem the wave of life which is so palpably and so inevitably ebbing away.

With great presence of mind Clement Woodleigh presses forward, saying in Spanish:

"Please let me pass. I know something of surgery, and may be able to give the wounded man some assistance."

A path is at once cleared for him, and Clement Woodleigh stands face to face with Muriel, who sobs convulsively, evidently more terrified than grief-stricken. Looking up, with a start and a little cry, she recognises the painter.

"Do not excite yourself," he says, in English, and in a low tone, as he lays his hand upon her shoulder. "Let me look at this man—your husband, is he not?"

She mutters something inarticulately, and Clement Woodleigh kneels down and places his hand upon the man's heart. Life, he finds, is fast ebbing away; the stricken man lies with half-closed eyes, which are rapidly glazing with the death film, but at the sound of Clement Woodleigh's voice, he seems to rouse himself, and slowly turns his dim eyes towards him.

"You!" he says, in a faint tone. "You! Why are you here?"

"I am here quite by accident," replies Clement Woodleigh, gravely. "Can I do anything for you?"

An almost wondering look passes over the countenance of the dying man.

"Can I do anything for you?" repeats

Clement Woodleigh. "It is best to tell you that you have not very long to live!"

The man opens his eyes.

"Are you in earnest," he asks, "in saying you will do anything for me?"

"Quite in earnest," emphatically asserts Clement Woodleigh.

"Do you recollect the circumstances under which we last met?"

"Perfectly," is the reply, "but do not think of them now. Let me know if I can do anything for you."

"Save my life!" he replies, promptly.

"I fear that is impossible," returns Clement Woodleigh, gravely, "your fate is in other hands than ours."

The man closes his eyes. A yet more deathly pallor overspreads his countenance; and the lookers on feel that the end is very near. Clement Woodleigh puts some restorative to the pale lips, and the man revives sufficiently to say, in a broken and feeble voice: "Muriel!"

"Yes," replies his wife, bending timidly over him; "what is it?"

For reply he turns his eyes towards Clement Woodleigh, with a questioning look in them.

"Look after her," he says, to the painter. "I never treated her very well, perhaps, but I cared for her more than ever I did for anything or anybody." And he lies back exhausted with the effort of speaking, whilst the tears rain thickly down Muriel's cheeks, and she sobs convulsively.

"I will do what I can for your wife, I promise you that," says Clement Woodleigh, earnestly.

"Thank you," he replies, faintly, without opening his heavy eyes. "Muriel," he continues, "forgive me!"

Muriel kneels down beside the dying man, and buries her face upon his hand.

"Forgive you!" she exclaims, between her convulsive sobs. "At this moment I feel I have nothing to forgive! I forget everything save that you are my husband and the father of my child!"

"The little child!" he says, softly, whilst a faint, dull glow comes into his death-like cheek; "our little child! Kiss her for me!"

For answer, Muriel sobs bitterly.

"One word," says Clement Woodleigh, bending over the dying man. "Can you tell me anything concerning the Lady Isola Marbourne?"

"Ask Muriel," he replies. And now a great and wonderful change passes over the man's face; he heaves a few convulsive sighs, and in a few minutes his spirit passes into the great Unknown Land.

Clement Woodleigh helps to have the body removed to the humble lodging where the man and the wife had been staying. The death of a gipsy, in what would be designated "a drunken brawl," is considered beneath the notice of the authorities, and thus it comes to pass that Muriel is left with her dead, untroubled by any official inquiries.

All through the night she sits dumbly looking at the dead body of her husband, whilst her unconscious, rosy babe sleeps peacefully and placidly upon a pallet on the floor. With some difficulty, Clement Woodleigh procures an old woman, whom he pays to stay for the night with the bereaved wife and mother.

This episode completely changes all Clement Woodleigh's plans. His late interview with the Countess of Brakeholme is almost forgotten, and as he paces slowly up and down the orange-shaded walk near the hotel where the earl is staying, he muses upon this unexpected and curious link in the chain which seems to link his destiny with that of the Lady Isola.

His intense desire to hear of her he did not like to intrude at present upon the grief of Muriel; and he paces backwards and forwards wondering if he be nearer to the Lady Isola than he dreams of.

"The countess has gone to her own room," volunteers the Earl of Brakeholme, as soon as the painter makes his appearance. "I am afraid she is rather overcome with the heat," he continues, anxiously, "so I think we had better leave this as soon as possible. I hope that will fall in with your plans, Mr. Woodleigh."

Clement Woodleigh relates to the earl the exciting scene which he has just witnessed, and to which that nobleman listens with no ordinary degree of interest and perplexity.

"Woodleigh, my dear fellow!" he exclaims, "of course we must not lose sight of this woman. Her assistance will be invaluable in our endeavours to recover my dear, lost child. I must go," he continues, energetically rising, "and tell this to the countess. She will be as surprised and delighted as I am."

Clement Woodleigh has his own private opinion as to the degree of delight the countess is likely to experience respecting the news that there is a probability of recovering the Lady Isola. That she will feel surprised, he has no doubt; but, in his private mind, he is sceptical regarding her delight at the information.

Early the next morning Clement Woodleigh is out and about making inquiries respecting Muriel and her husband. He can only gather that they are supposed to belong to a band of gipseys who occasionally visit the neighbourhood. Muriel was celebrated, he is told, for her beauty, and for her charming voice; so much so, that it occurred to her husband to turn both to account, and thus it came to pass, that, under the name of "The Gipsy Queen of Song" she was in the habit of singing at the cafés and restaurants.

The attentions she was accustomed to receive were continually productive of quarrels between her and her husband. Like all gipseys, he was especially tenacious of the honour of his womankind, and, as has before been stated, met with the accident which caused his death, in a fit of jealous rage.

Beyond these barren facts no one seems to know anything about Muriel. The band of gipseys to which she is said to belong are spoken of as harmless, and even sympathy seems to be felt for the bereaved wife.

Clement Woodleigh now wends his way to

where Muriel lives. He finds her yet in her fantastic dress, sitting by the body of her dead husband. The child plays on the ground beside her, and the mother rocks herself backwards and forwards, her eyes fixed upon the dead face upon the pallet.

Clement Woodleigh lays his hand upon her shoulder gently, and says:

"Muriel, look up at me; do you not know me?"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

I'd be a gipsy, merry and free,
Hoving along like the bird or the bee;
All through the woodland, merry and wild,
All through the summer's day, free as a child.
BACLET.

MURIEL does not stir. She does not in any way give any token of being aware of the presence of Clement Woodleigh. She makes no moan; no cry nor lamentation of any kind escapes her lips; the convulsive sobs of the night before have ceased. And save for the almost mechanical rocking to and fro of her body, she seems as though turned into stone.

For her face is colourless as marble, her eyes are fixedly fastened upon the face of the dead man, and her arms are rigidly clasped upon her bosom. Even the prattle of the child does not seem to arouse her, and Clement Woodleigh again says:

"Muriel, look up at me; will you not speak to me?"

She turns her eyes slowly from the dead face upon the pallet, and fixes them upon the painter. Yet there is no look of recognition—only a dull, dazed, hunted expression, as upon the face of a dumb animal.

"I am sorry for you," he says, quietly. "Come, Muriel, you must try and rouse yourself. Think of your child."

He raises the babe in his arms as he speaks; and a slight flush passes over her pale, livid face. Presently her lips quiver, her glassy eyes become humid, the blessed tears come, and she weeps passionately.

This is exactly what Clement Woodleigh wants. He allows the violence of her grief to exhaust itself, and then speaks to her kindly and calmly of her bereavement. At length he touches upon the subject of the interment of her husband; and much to his surprise, she replies:

"You are very kind, but I must leave all details respecting that to the tribe. The old woman you left with me, I have sent to acquaint the chief of the death of my husband. But I first want to make a bargain with you."

"What is it?" he inquires, surprised to find her now speak so coldly and collectedly.

"It is this—promise me that you will not take any steps to arrest any of the tribe you may possibly come in contact with."

"Why should I make such a promise?" he asks, evasively.

"Because," and the tears again flow fast down her pale cheeks—"because although I know very well that they have acted badly, and treated the Lady Isola cruelly, yet they are the people of my husband, and I ask you to let them go unmolested; and in payment for doing so, I shall deliver up to you the Lady Isola."

"You promise this faithfully?" Clement Woodleigh looks at her keenly as he speaks.

"Faithfully!" she asseverates, emphatically and earnestly.

"I did not fancy you were so much attached to your husband?"

"No matter whether I was or not," she replies, quickly, "I was his wife, and he was the father of my child, let that suffice. Will you give me the promise I seek?"

Clement Woodleigh hesitates. So often has he just failed at the eleventh hour when he has seemed to be on the point of discovering the whereabouts of the Lady Isola, that he scarcely likes to give a promise, which he, of course, as an honourable man, would feel bound to keep.

"You evidently do not trust me!" she exclaims, with flashing eyes, as she draws up her small, slight form proudly, and confronts him.

Like a veritable young queen she looks as she pushes back the heavy masses of her bright, pale gold hair, and continues, "What do you take me for, that you will not trust me? Do you think I forget that you once saved the life of my child? the one thing I really care for in this world. That alone would bind me to you by every tie of gratitude and grateful devotion. Independent of that circumstance," she adds, with a certain amount of pride in her tones, "I am not a gipsy. I do not belong to the tribe. I have nothing to bind me to them, now that my child's father is dead, therefore, it is no breach of faith for me to betray them, so far as that I promise to deliver the Lady Isola into your hands. In token of it!" she exclaims, vehemently, catching up her child, "I swear by my baby, the most precious thing in the world to me!"

"I believe you," he says, much impressed by her vehemence—"I believe you fully; and I promise that I will not alone molest any of the tribe myself, and," with a saving remembrance of the Earl and Countess of Brakeholme, "I shall do my best to hinder others from doing so also."

"Thank you," she replies, simply; "as soon as I have seen my husband buried according to the traditions of his race, I mean to leave this community of smuggling gipseys."

"I was not at first aware they were gipseys," he says, with some curiosity.

"Yes, they are a race of smuggling gipseys, peculiar to Spain," says Muriel. "Gipseys do not, as a rule, intermarry with any but their own race; however, these are peculiar in that respect, being the descendants of the marauding Moors, and somewhat incorrectly called gipseys. They have many of the characteristics and customs of that strange, wandering people, but they are, I am told, less animal in their habits, and more intellectual than the gipseys proper."

"You interest me strangely in this race," replies Clement Woodleigh, as he glances at the still, handsome face of the dead man, lying on the pallet in the corner.

"I may tell you more again," she says, passing her hand wearily over her brow. "At present what I have said must content you."

"When and where shall I meet you, so that you may redeem your promise?" he asks, eagerly.

"In Paris," she replies. "Go to Paris, and in one week from this day meet me at nightfall in the Passage du Havre. I must wait," she continues, "until I deliver up my husband's body to his tribe, that it may be buried according to their rites."

She sinks down upon a seat as she speaks, and her lips quiver convulsively.

"Where does the burial take place?" he inquires, as soon as she is somewhat more composed.

"Excuse my answering any questions upon the subject," she replies, in a somewhat reticent tone. "It can be of no particular concern to you where or when my husband is interred, therefore oblige me by not continuing the conversation."

Clement Woodleigh bows and takes up his hat.

"You will recollect what I have said," she continues. "You are not to take any measures to arrest any of the tribe?"

"I shall respect the terms of the agreement," he says.

"And I shall respect it upon my side," she exclaims, eagerly. "And I promise you faithfully that on this night week I shall meet you in Paris—in the Passage du Havre—and there, if I do not deliver up to you the Lady Isola, I shall at least tell you where she is immediately to be found, and that without any risk. And now, good-bye." She concludes, holding out her hand: "I promise you we shall meet again."

Clement Woodleigh feels it would be an intrusion were he to remain in Muriel's presence any longer. He goes slowly down the dark stone staircase, and out into the narrow, crooked, ill-paved street, with its foul odours and reeking uncleanness of all kinds. From thence he

emerges into the newer and cleaner part of the town, and at length reaches the small enclosure, called by courtesy, "a square," one side of which is almost entirely occupied by the hotel of the Earl and Countess of Brakeholme.

The late déjeuner à la fourchette is on the table as he arrives, and the countess, her deadly pale cheeks palpably touched with rouge, is reclining in an arm-chair, attired in a pale pink silk and muslin morning robe. Even through her rouge her sorrowful face perceptibly flushes as Clement Woodleigh makes his morning salutations. The earl is at the table, sensibly applying his attention to the creature comforts with which the table is laden, and as Clement Woodleigh enters, he says:

"Good morning, Woodleigh. Have you been out looking for an appetite?"

"Well, not exactly. May I ask how your ladyship is this morning?" he inquires formally.

"Much surprised at the news my husband has just communicated to me," she says, rather defiantly, and looking straight at Clement Woodleigh as she speaks. "Pray, Mr. Woodleigh, do tell me the true version of this marvelous story. You must be quite aware of how anxious I am to hear of any news of our dear Isola."

Clement Woodleigh feels an intense contempt for this miserable, deceitful, treacherous woman. She is a capital actress, and never quails for one instant under the scornful glance which he cannot repress. But in secret her weak, guilty, passionate soul shrivels up beneath his gaze, yet her brazen effrontery enables her to carry herself defiantly.

The painter tells as much as he deems necessary, carefully suppressing the fact that the woman Muriel has definitely arranged to meet him in Paris, and to deliver up to him the Lady Isola.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Hast thou a hope with which thy heart
Would almost feel it death to part?
Entreat thy fate that hope to crown,
Or ask for strength to lay it down.

FAIRB.

THE Countess of Brakeholme is not quite satisfied with the account given by Clement Woodleigh of his interview with Muriel. She is, like all crafty, intriguing natures, of a suspicious disposition, and she believes there is much more behind that the painter has suppressed.

Therefore, by means of much questioning, she contrives to find out the café where the drunken brawl took place. From that she finds it easy enough to learn where Muriel is lodging; and thither she proceeds.

But the Countess of Brakeholme comes too late. The bird has flown. Muriel and her dead husband have been taken away by the tribe, and about the time the Countess of Brakeholme comes to the lodging, they are rapidly travelling the low-lying sandy flats which surround Madrid, and are journeying fast towards the neighbourhood of the Alhambra, where is the ancient burying place of this particular tribe of Moorish gipseys.

At the dead of night, some two or three days afterwards, the body is committed to the ground in silence; the sod is carefully replaced, and when the morning sun again flings its beams over the land, it would be impossible for any uninitiated person to tell that the turf had been removed.

Having seen these last rites performed, Muriel, despite the solicitation of the tribe that she will stay amongst them, sets off on her journey to Paris, and here there is need for all her diplomacy.

She has lately become aware that those who have the custody of the Lady Isola have become tired of their charge, and have set a price upon her head. She knows also that the members of the gang of smuggling gipseys are strictly watched by the authorities, who try by every means in their power to hinder any of them from entering Paris.

Muriel knows that all the railway stations are watched by officials, who have minute descriptions of many members of the gang, and Muriel has been told that from her attractive appearance she has been a subject of especial notice.

Bitterly she now regrets the possession of the fateful gift of beauty, and ponders upon the safest way of entering Paris so as not to be tracked to her destination. At length she decides upon a plan.

Leaving the train at a roadside station some miles from Paris, she purchases, at a little village, some of the ordinary articles of clothing, including a white muslin cap, such as are commonly worn by the Paris market women. In order to give herself the bulky, ungraceful figure of a French peasant woman, Muriel puts these clothes on over her ordinary clothing; her abundant hair she pushes back and rolls up tightly in an unbecoming manner, and surmounts it with the thick white cap.

But this is not all. By means of some of the cunning secrets known amongst the gipseys she slightly stains her face and hands, thus making herself look old and coarse-looking, and having effected this transformation, she ties the heavy babe upon her back and sets forth to walk to Paris.

It is night when she arrives at the barrier, where stand the stern, uncompromising sergeants de ville, with their long pikes ready to plunge them into the market carts, to try and detect any contraband goods.

The babe is sleeping peacefully at her back, covered up with her cloak, and as Muriel attempts to pass in through the gate, an official roughly touches the child.

"Stop!" he exclaims, peremptorily. "What is this?"

"Only my child," she replies, promptly. "I am a market woman from three leagues beyond Nanterre, and am on my way to join my husband at the vegetable market."

Foolish woman! She speaks in excellent French, but the sharp ear of the sergeant de ville, accustomed to the guttural patois of the market women, and the clipping, shrill voice of some of them, immediately detects the difference both in speech and accent.

"Ah! a good story, my friend," he says, incredulously, as he bars the way with his pike; "a good story—enter, madame!" and he waves his hand towards the little lodge by the side of the gate, where there is a light burning.

Muriel's heart sinks. But she knows she must obey; and therefore follows the sergeant de ville. His practised eye at once detects the perturbation in her manner, which she in vain endeavours to repress; and he hands her over to two officials with the significant words:

"An object of suspicion—search!"

Despite her protestations, they proceed to divest her of her cloak, and rouse the sleeping child, who cries lustily. Her cap is taken off, allowing her marvellously abundant fair hair to ripple in luxuriant waves to her waist. The contrast between the dark skin and her fair golden hair does not escape the notice of the searchers, who are not slow to detect that art has been used to conceal her real complexion.

Moreover, a large pocket by her side excites their curiosity. They examine it, and find that it contains some curious golden ornaments—notably, "the golden circle" which she had worn as "the Gipsy Queen of Song."

They consider that appearances are sufficiently against her to warrant them in regarding her as a decidedly suspicious character. Consequently, Muriel is given into the charge of two sergeants de ville, and the morning of the day she was to have kept her appointment with Clement Woodleigh finds her a prisoner, and under strict surveillance.

Meanwhile, on the plea of urgent business, Clement Woodleigh has left the Earl and Countess of Brakeholme, and has proceeded to Paris. Upon the night appointed, he keeps his tryst at the Passage du Havre, but no Muriel appears.

He scrutinises the face of each one who passes, but fails to recognise her features or

mien. Later and later it grows, and he at length becomes aware of the fact that the people in the shops, and the itinerant vendors of wares, are beginning to look askance at him. It is uncomfortable, but he fears to lose the chance of meeting Muriel, and caring not for the suspicious looks with which he is greeted, he continues his peregrinations, till, thoroughly tired, he seeks his hotel some time during the small hours.

The next night he keeps his vigil, and the next, and the next. But no Muriel appears upon the scene, and Clement Woodleigh, bitterly disappointed, is about to return, when he suddenly meets his friend Ernest Maybrick.

"Halloa!" exclaims the latter, cheerily, "why, my dear fellow, I thought you were either tossing about on the briny deep, or luxuriating on some sweet little isle of your own in the blue Mediterranean."

"Neither, you see!" replies Clement Woodleigh; "the truth is," he asserts, evasively and mendaciously, "I fancy we all got tired of each other's society, and were very glad to separate. I know I speak for myself."

To Ernest Maybrick Clement Woodleigh had spoken more openly respecting the Lady Isola than to anyone else, yet, at this juncture, he felt a sort of diffidence in telling him of his real mission to Paris.

"So glad to meet you!" says Ernest Maybrick. "I have been here for a couple of days. I have taken a run over just to refresh my memory with a look at those Rubens' series of pictures in the Louvre. How long are you going to stay?"

"I am not sure," is the answer; "not long, I fancy, as I want to get back to work again."

They dine together, and after dinner Clement Woodleigh makes some excuse for leaving his friend, and departs to keep one more tryst at the appointed place of meeting.

But yet Muriel does not come, and Clement Woodleigh returns to his hotel, determined to leave Paris the following evening.

He even goes to the address in Paris given to him by Isola Marbourne. The house he finds shut up, and in the care of a deaf concierge, who either cannot or will not afford any information. Thus, baffled on all sides, he determines to return to London, and to try if Isola can give him any further information.

Ernest Maybrick walks through the grand galleries of the Louvre, saunters through the magnificent hall of Apollo, and presently finds himself in the gallery with the Rubens pictures. He walks backwards and forwards intently studying the huge canvases, and presently he becomes aware of a woman's gaze being fixed intently upon him.

(To be Continued.)

COPYRIGHT IN ARTISTIC PROPERTY.

THE resolutions of the International Congress on artistic property held in Paris recommend a copyright of 100 years. The right of reproduction should not necessarily be involved in the sale, or in the presentation to the State, of a work of art except in the case of the portrait or statue of the vendor or any member of his family. Piracy should include the reproduction or imitation for sale by any different art or industry, and also the unauthorised transcription and setting of music. The assumption of an artist's name, signature, or distinctive mark should be punishable.

Societies should be founded for the protection of artists' rights, the collection of dues for reproduction, representation, and execution, and the creation of relief funds. An international artistic society should also be founded. Foreign artists should have equal rights with natives, without condition of reciprocity, on simply proving their copyright in their own country. Artistic copyright treaties should be independent of commercial treaties, and should apply to works anterior to the conclusion of the treaties. Uniform legislation on artistic property is also desirable.

The congress request the French Minister of Education and Fine Arts to promote the meeting of an official international commission for the purpose of forming a uniform law.

HER GUIDING STAR;

OR,

LOVE AND TREACHERY.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE oculist had not disappointed the expectation of Mr. Fannuir and his family. His fine constitution, little impaired except by occasional attacks of gout, and his hopeful temperament, coming in aid of a really skilful operator, the ultimate restoration of the eye was soon pronounced certain, and a short time put it in a condition to be used under some restrictions. This, together with the assiduities of his children, and the effect of agreeable change, seemed to rejuvenate him. He was pleased with everything and everybody.

Ernest interested Jessie more than he had done heretofore. His tender sadness came nearer her heart than his thoughtless, happy gaiety. Formerly she laughed with him, but could forget him; now, with all the sensibility of her own nature awakened, she was the more strongly drawn towards him. If he were silent, she became so; if he smiled, she rejoiced; if he were sad, she was only the more thoughtful for him. Her young friends had greeted her return with welcomes and invitations, but she resisted whatever interfered with kind consideration for Ernest. To cheer him when present, to pity him when absent, became a habit, the more confirmed by his reliance on her.

The improvement in Miss Fannuir, if not as great as in her father, was more striking, because that, on her first arrival, a more than usual languor and dejection were visible. Years had elapsed since her last visit to her sister. Many changes had taken place.

A fine afternoon and the solicitations of Jessie had tempted her aunt beyond the limit of her usual walk, and, on entering the study by the garden door, she perceived that she looked pale and wearied.

"I have been a foolish girl," said Jessie, "but, when I got among those trees, they always cheat me into going too far. Dear aunt, let me arrange a couch for you here. You are too tired to take another step. There is the settee on the piazza, and here," said she, filling her arms as she spoke, "are these sofa-cushions; they will make a nice resting-place for you. I'll carry them out, and have it ready in a minute."

"No, no, my love; I'll go to my room. Someone may come, and I should not fancy to be thus caught."

"Nobody will come; nobody ever does come here now," replied Jessie, with a sigh. "There will only be the sun to look at you, and he is about taking his rest too; he is so low he can only peep at you through the branches."

Miss Fannuir was not one of the resisting order; and, telling Jessie she always made her do as she pleased, she yielded to the arrangement.

"You have placed me like a lay figure. Now what do you propose to do with me? You see I can resist none of your vagaries."

"Oh, if I could sketch you just as you are! but I cannot. Therefore I shall put you to sleep. Now not another word! but shut your eyes like a good child."

As if under the spell of her irresistible attendant, Miss Fannuir obeyed; and Jessie, in a little while, satisfied that she really slept, stole quietly into the study, and thence into the hall to prevent any intrusion from that quarter.

At length a foot crossed the threshold of the garden door, and a gentleman cast an inquiring

look within, as if in quest of someone. He gazed; his soul seems looking from his eyes! One instant; the next he is on his knee, the hand is in his, and his lip is pressed on a simple gold ring. The action has roused the lady; she wakes to hear "Alice!" uttered in a voice which, though silent to her outward ear, has never, through long, long years, ceased to speak to her heart. Speech fails her. Does she still sleep? Does she dream? That face, changed, yet still the same, is it a reality?

Another pressure of her hand, that name, now disused, perhaps forgotten by all but himself, again uttered, assure her of the living presence of one whom she had never thought to see again this side of Heaven, and she ventures to say, in a low and timid voice, "Fairfax?"

"Yes, Alice," he exclaimed; "I should doubt my own identity if you did not admit it. Could we ever fail to recognise each other?"

Still she looked at him, immovable, wondering—tears filling her asking eyes.

"I know what you would say," said he, rising; and, assisting her attempt to do the same, he placed himself by her side. "You would ask why I am here? Here of all places! There is much to tell you, dear Alice, but at another time. Now, I will only say that urgent business brought me to London. I could not be there, and not see your sister and Mr. Farleigh, always my friends. Failing to find him at his office, I came hither; of your being here I had not the remotest thought. In my ignorance of the house I blundered in at the wrong entrance, and was led, not by chance, but by Heaven, to you—never to be again parted from you!"

A cloud overspread her fair brow. A deprecating look—a deep sigh, were the only answer.

"I understand you. You would say the same obstacles exist. They may, but they shall no longer prevail. 'Alice,' continued he, with solemnity, 'you love me still. If time, as I sometimes feared, had worn me out of your affection, I would be silent. But your look, your manner, this sacred symbol never laid aside, attest your fidelity.'"

She attempted to speak, but he continued earnestly:

"Oh, hear me farther. The happiness of our lives has been sacrificed by a weak submission to a false principle. It shall be so no longer. I will claim you as my wife. I ought to have done so when you were first torn from me."

A loving but weeping face, eyes upturned as if imploring strength from above, betrayed the conflict his words had excited.

"Oh, that is not all!" she at length said.

"If no opposition—there are—no considerations. How can I impose a wreck upon you?—upon you, still capable of happiness? How can I burden you with the poor remains of what, even in its best estate, was not worth the love you lavished on it? No—no—no! it is wrong, ungenerous. I should be humbled to the dust were I to do so."

"Alice! Alice!" said Mr. Fairfax, in a tender but reproachful tone, "is this the language you should hold to me? Were you, indeed, the wreck you fear, should I not love the ruin I perhaps had caused? And has not time done its work on me too? But I will not so wrong true love as to rest it on the outward creature. I could, indeed, dear Alice, still address to you the words of mere human affection; could tell you that I love you in that sense that satisfies most women; that I had not outlived my youthful passion; that no conceivable happiness could equal the possession of you; that—"

"Do not—do not speak so. You deceive yourself. I am nothing—nothing."

"No, I will not; but rather of that union of heart, mind, and soul, that time has only strengthened. To this union I claim the right of setting that seal which He has Himself appointed, not alone for present happiness, but as an earnest of that still better union for which it is a preparation. Do not, then, disturb your own mind and distress me by considerations unworthy of us both."

Her tears flowed faster. She could only say:

"You are too good—too good. I do not deserve it."

He looked at her in silence; then in a tender and admiring tone, rather as if thinking aloud, said:

"Still the same! humble, gentle, self-distrusting; still, as in the language of my youth, 'My lovely Alice!'"

What could woman—true, believing woman—say? Her heart was on her lips, ready to pour forth all he could ask, but a cruel fear restrained her, and a look of agony overspread her face as he said:

"My father! my promise!"

"Bless you, Alice, that you insist on no other obstacle! Your father's objections shall be met with all respect; but, if still immovable—I say it deliberately—I will disregard them."

"But my promise," she repeated.

"I am the last person to make light of it; but we must not let reverence exaggerate itself into superstition. That promise was made under circumstances which deprived you of free agency. Only a tender, conscientious spirit, like your own, would have held it obligatory to the extent that you have done. We have both been sacrificed to it. Your mother, could she have foreseen its consequences, would never have exacted it; and, if now comprehending what passes here, will rejoice in the breach of it."

His calmness restored her own.

"Hear me," said she, "for a moment, and then you must leave me. You are not aware that my father is now in this house. I cannot permit you to meet him at present. I must have time to reflect. Let me decide as I may, I have need of a strength that now I do not feel. Leave me; you shall hear from me to-morrow."

"Do with me as you please. I shall go, but in the confident trust not alone of hearing from you, but of seeing you, to-morrow."

"Go—go!" said she, earnestly, the dread of her father taking possession of her.

He comprehended her fear, passed from the piazza through the garden, and retreated, unseen, as he had entered.

Left to herself, Miss Fannuir's first care was to escape to the privacy of her own room, which she reached unperceived, even by Jessie.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MR. FANMUIR, in a happy unconsciousness of what was going on elsewhere, reclined in his chair in the dining-room, and near him, at the tea-table, was Mrs. Farleigh.

"We'll have tea, Emily, if you please," said he, and, Mrs. Farleigh ringing the bell, Susan was directed to tell Miss Fannuir it was ready.

She returned in a few moments, and, dropping a courtesy to the old gentleman, as if deprecating the effect of the answer she brought, said:

"Miss Fannuir is not well, sir, and can't come, she says."

This was a sound seldom heard patiently by Mr. Fannuir.

"Not well! What's the matter now? She was well enough at dinner."

"I don't know, sir. Miss Fannuir looks very ill."

"Do, Emily, go up and see what it is. These creatures always make everything as bad as they can."

Mrs. Farleigh did not need the injunction. Hurrying to her sister's room, she found her in a state most unusual, and which, knowing no cause for it, she naturally referred to physical indisposition.

Mrs. Farleigh left her, as she requested, but not much assured by what she had said; and Mr. Fannuir, on hearing it, put down his scarce tasted tea, pushed his chair from the table, and leaning back in it, sighed heavily.

His daughter, to relieve him, repeated her sister's words:

"She will be better in the morning, sir."

"No, she won't," he replied, quickly, "nor the next day, nor the next, nor never; never I tell you."

"Dear papa, even if she should be indisposed

for a few days, there can be no cause for uneasiness. We will send for Doctor Thompson in the morning."

"Doctor Fiddlestick! Do you suppose I'm an idiot, Emily? All the drugs in the Materia Medica can't help her."

"Why, papa?" expostulated Mrs. Farleigh. "There is surely nothing in Janet's indisposition to excite alarm."

"Pshaw, child! I don't suppose she's going to die; perhaps it would be better that she should. She would go to Heaven, and I might be made more fit for it. But she won't die; she will live, and she will suffer; and so it always is. I never see a little sunshine, I never feel happy and cheery, but some miserable thing turns up to contradict me. I am a wretched man—I am."

"Dear papa, don't say so."

"I will say so. Here she has been so well and cheerful that, old as I am, I thought she would continue so; that, at last, she was happy; and my heart was lighter than it has been for years; and now—now it's all over! the same dark cloud again!"

"Oh no, sir; this is some accidental thing—some little nervous derangement."

"Ay, yes; there it is, those infernal nerves! Don't I know what that means?"

"Nothing mysterious, papa; everybody knows what nerves mean."

"Do they? I wish I did; I only know that they mean misery. Oh, Lord! I wish I was dead."

"My dear father," interposed Mrs. Farleigh, but resisting her sympathy, he suddenly exclaimed:

"Where is that fellow?"

Mrs. Farleigh, perhaps not comprehending, did not speak.

"Is he in this country?"

Still she was silent.

"Is he alive?"

Mrs. Farleigh, as if like the jester and the sultan in the Oriental tale, she were resolved to compel her father first to pronounce the prohibited name, sat speechless.

"Where does he hide himself?" continued Mr. Fannmuir.

"Whom do you mean, papa?" at length she asked.

"You know, very well," he replied, impatiently. "Whom should I mean, but the man who has caused all this trouble—Fairfax! I say, where is he?"

"He is living, sir, and in Ireland."

"Why, then, have I never been able to hear of him? Why have not you, or your husband, by any chance ever spoken of him? Why have I been kept in ignorance?"

His rising displeasure forced Mrs. Farleigh on her defence.

"You must recollect, papa, that his name has been interdicted for years; that every trace of him has been purposely obliterated; even his portrait saved from destruction only on the condition of being never seen—" she might have added, that the family breach, mainly occasioned by the sympathy of her husband and herself with Mr. Fairfax, had prevented all communication; but he checked farther remonstrance by saying, "Well, well, if it was so then, now I want to hear of him—nay, to see him, if it be possible to get any comfort out of him. Can he not be written to?"

"Certainly; but to what purpose, sir?"

"Emily, don't drive me mad. To what purpose? Why to bring him here, and marry him to Janet."

Mrs. Farleigh was dumb with astonishment.

After some hesitation she replied:

"My sister would not approve of such a step. I am sure, and might not consent if he were to come."

"Oh, I daresay. As soon as I propose anything, though it has been sighed for through a lifetime, it is enough to prevent it. Just like my family. Never was a man so contradicted. But I say it shall be done. I won't live so any more. And pray why should she object?"

"You must allow, papa, for the feelings of a

delicate woman. Even if her own are the same towards him, she may naturally fear a change in his sentiments."

"Sentiments! Oh, he has nerves too, eh! Of course sentiments and nerves—they always go together."

"Or, perhaps," continued Mrs. Farleigh, "she may fear the effect of time on her appearance."

"Appearance!" interrupted he, angrily, "why, there isn't a prettier woman this day in the United Kingdom of her age—no, nor even younger. She's only a hundred times too handsome for him. Object to Janet, indeed!"

"Oh, no, sir, I did not say that. I merely suggested a natural apprehension on her part. You know, sir," added she, with a smile, "we women have our weak points, and that is one of them. But, besides, sir, Mr. Fairfax has been ill-treated—at least, so he thinks—and we cannot be surprised if that should render the connection undesirable. In short, sir, I must beg you will not insist on my writing as you propose."

"Very well; if you won't write, Farleigh will; and if he won't, Jessie shall. I will have it done, and that before another day passes. I am old—I must soon die—I will not any longer have this man's face for ever thrusting itself between me and heaven, nor Janet's complaints turning aside my prayers."

"Complaints, sir! Surely, my sister never complains?"

"No, not in words. But do you think that to be obeyed, cherished, honoured, as if I had never given her a moment's pain; to be watched when ill, as if her life hung on mine; and to look like an angel with a broken heart! do you think there are, or can be, complaints louder than these?"

Alarmed by her father's vehemence and agitation, she directed all her efforts to calm him, and in some degree succeeded. He consented to talk over the matter coolly with Mr. Farleigh, and above all not to touch on it to his daughter at present.

This done, and having induced him to retire at an early hour, with her habitual deference to her husband's opinion, she suspended her final judgment till he should return.

It is enough to say that Mr. Fairfax came; that a conference with him and Mr. Fannmuir ensued, conciliatory and conclusive; that he was indulged in a long interview with Miss Fannmuir, the result of which was eloquently inscribed on their happy and serene faces, when they afterward joined the family circle. Oh, Love, when art thou worthiest of our homage? In our morn of youth—like the coming of day, joyous and beautiful, yet often capricious, and failing of thy rich promise? In our noon—fervid, full of mastery, maddening and destroying some, though leading others by flowery paths and beside still waters?

Jessie's sympathy with her aunt was, as might be expected, full and undemonstrative. She could speak of nothing but the happiness that was at last to reward her sweet and patient life, and loved to dwell on everything that could add to it interest or romance.

Entering thus into her aunt's interests, Jessie conceived the greatest liking for Mr. Fairfax. His goodness, his dignified yet simple manners, his refined yet playful ways, were her constant theme.

It is but fair to say that, like everything in Jessie, the sentiment was genuine. It had nothing to do with Cyril, of whose intimate relations with Mr. Fairfax she was still ignorant, that gentleman having reasons to be no farther communicative on the subject than he had formerly been. On the contrary, his manner, when speaking of him, was the only thing she did not like in Mr. Fairfax.

"That was a respectable young man," said Mr. Farleigh, one day, "whom you were so good to send to us—Mr. Ashleigh, I mean. We were quite sorry to part with him. I hope he is likely to do well."

"Yes, I think so," said Mr. Fairfax, coldly.

Jessie coloured and bit her lip.

"He was a well-mannered young man, too," continued Mr. Farleigh, "remarkably so, in his condition. Not at all presuming—appeared to understand his place as well as his business, which is not common in these days. I shall always be happy to see him, and to be of use to him."

"I am glad he gave you satisfaction," was all the reply vouchsafed.

And Jessie, feeling her anger rising against them both, fled out of the room.

Cyril's sudden and never-explained removal from Mr. Farleigh's family, together with its obvious effect on him, had been a cause of painful conjecture to Mr. Fairfax. When he saw Jessie he was confirmed in his suspicion that it was connected with her. In the evening, as he sat by her side, he said:

"I have not heard your opinion of the teacher I sent you. Did you like him? I mean, of course, only as an instructor."

Vexed to have her estimate so restricted, she replied, coldly:

"Oh, yes, very well."

Her conduct to Ernest Pelham confirmed his suspicion. Yet, if she were, indeed, unfriendly to his favourite, he could not be unjust to her; and, seeing daily more and more of her attractive qualities, he became still more regretful of the hard fate of Cyril.

Nearly a fortnight had elapsed since the arrival of Mr. Fairfax. Mr. Farleigh and Mr. Fairfax were often closeted in the library; Mrs. Farleigh with her sister in her room. Mr. Fannmuir and Jessie—the oldest and the youngest most approximating—whispered, laughed, and took counsel together—he in his arm-chair, she on a low seat at his feet.

"I will have it so," said he. "I will not hear of any silly delay. Why, I may die in a week—in a day—and I will see it first."

Then followed half-whispered suggestions, smiles of intelligence, and exclamations of: "All right! that's a good girl! a very good girl! You shall be married, too, one of these days."

At length the hall clock is heard to strike eleven, and, the door opening, Miss Fannmuir, led by Mr. Fairfax, enters, attended by Mrs. Farleigh and Jessie, and followed, at a respectful distance, by the domestics. The clergyman and Mr. Fannmuir rise, and the proper disposition of all parties made, the book is opened, and those portentous words so fraught with happiness or misery, usher in the solemn rite.

A slight irregularity at the moment of betrothal threatens to disturb it. Instead of putting on the ring in the usual manner, Mr. Fairfax is observed to draw one off, press it to his lips, and then replace it. Some hearts beat quicker, but no agitation interrupts the holy benediction, which now sets its seal to the ceremony.

(To be Continued.)

THE STORY OF LIFE.

As I was walking by the side of a running stream, I heard voices, and, listening, I caught these words:

"What would you that I should give you?"

Another voice replied, "I would that you give me eternal life."

"And what use would you make of eternal life?"

"Oh, I would laugh and sing all my days; leaping from rock to rock until I reached the broad river; then on and on to the sea, there to frolic with the waves," was the eager reply.

"And what then?" the voice asked.

"Oh, then I should play hide and seek with the fishes, and hide in the pretty shells."

"And what then?"

"I could be kissed by the sunbeams, warmed by their rays, carried by them to another place, and then be let loose into the gentle bosom of some lovely flower, to gladden its heart."

"And what then?"

"I should be the life of that flower, blooming radiantly, streaming fragrance in everyone's path."

"And what then?"

"Well, I don't know. After all, that is but play. Well, I think I should learn the will of the Giver of eternal life, and do that with all my heart."

"Do that to-day and every day in the present life, and the eternal life shall follow this for you, without a doubt."

And having learned my lesson I came away, hoping that for me, too, should follow that other life to which this is but the prelude. LULU.

We understand that the Second Winter Exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery will open in December, and will consist, as before, of drawings by the old masters and water-colour drawings. All those collectors who last year contributed to the success of the exhibition have again promised their support, and many fresh promises of help have already been received. Sir Coutts Lindsay will be grateful to all who possess old drawings, or to others who may know of their existence, for any information which would serve to render the second exhibition a worthy successor to the first.

THE BARONESS OF THE ISLES.

CHAPTER V.

The young knight, with Matilda's colours streaming from his helmet, arose, and was about to turn away, when Prince Magnus and a score of knights and dignitaries gathered around him with congratulations.

"I knew," said Magnus, "that the man I vouched for was a true knight, but Ivar has shown a courage that is more than princely. Ivar, I am proud of you. You have the prowess of our royal brother Harold in that strong right arm, and it strikes me that you have the look of Harold in your features. Strange I never noted it before."

The king started and bent forward, with a curious pallor on his features.

In truth, Ivar looked as a royal prince might have looked, and his bearing would have become a king.

The young knight presently retired from the arena, and a few jousts between other combatants followed, but the tournament was virtually ended, and the king soon arose and withdrew, the Lady Matilda, the Princess Africa, and many nobles and ladies accompanying him.

Upon returning to the royal castle the king withdrew to his own chamber, and despatched a page to seek Wildred, and summon him to the royal presence.

A little later, Wildred, considerably battered, and limping from his wounds, entered the monarch's room.

There was a dark look on the knight's visage, and an evil expression in his eyes. He could ill bear his defeat, and he hated Ivar with an awful hatred.

"Come in, Wildred," said the king. "The battle went against you, eh? We were never more surprised in our life than when we saw you fall before Ivar's lance."

"It was witchcraft, your majesty," said Wildred, sullenly. "Ten of the best knights of the realm were worsted in the combat. Four knights are in the leech's hands, while Ivar walks the castle corridor unharmed."

"You have suffered a deep humiliation at his hands," said the wily monarch. "Ivar will plume himself that he hath conquered Wildred."

"He has drawn my blood, my lord, and it has ever been Wilfred's motto: 'Blood for blood!'" said the knight, savagely, his voice

low but full of meaning. "He shall pay for this day's work!"

"But how? He hath the advantage in a fair contest," said the king.

The eyes of Reginald and Wildred met in a look full of deep significance.

"Wildred," said the monarch, in a whisper, "the knight Ivar stands in my way. He hath a claim upon the Lady Matilda which he will not forego. He hath this day recommended himself to her favour more forcibly than ever. We have tried fair means to remove him. Now for others. We shall this very day, upon pretence that he is seditious against the government, banish him from the realm under penalty of death."

"But he will return secretly, my lord, or the Lady Matilda will go to him."

"She shall not be permitted to follow after him. If he return, all men shall be privileged to slay him," said the king. "We had thought to suborn witnesses to appear against him, hence we summoned you to conference. But who shall doubt our wisdom in banishing him?"

"The Prince Magnus, my lord, has declared himself his patron."

"But the Prince Magnus will not dare, befriend one accused of treason to the king. Magnus, prince though he is, is subject also, and will take good care not to befriend a traitor, seeing that our royal brother stands next in the line of succession. You may go, Wildred. I would be alone."

When Wildred had withdrawn, the king scowled darkly and gave himself up to meditation.

"Ivar must be banished," he muttered, "but even then I am not safe. Strange that he hath such a look of Harold. He stands in my way as regards Matilda. Perhaps also in another way I scarce dare name to myself. But Harold married the Lady Etheldreda, daughter of an English earl, for his first wife. He remained with his bride in England for three years. Then, with his wife and infant son he set sail for Man, but was wrecked on the voyage, on the very coast of this our island. His wife, the Lady Etheldreda, made a vow in her extreme peril that if her life were saved she would devote it to religion. Harold and Etheldreda, with a portion of their train, were saved. The child was lashed to a spar, but in the horror of the storm and darkness was carried overboard and believed to be lost. Is it possible that he was not lost?"

Reginald moved to and fro, strangely troubled and anxious.

"The Lady Etheldreda, in pursuance of her vow, and in agony over the loss of her son, took refuge in the convent. She urged Harold to seek a divorce, and this, after long time and pleadings, he did. Etheldreda maintains a court of her own at the convent, is rich and powerful, lives in state, and did she even suspect what I suspect about Ivar, would make me serious trouble. She is Baroness of the Isles, and second only to me, her king. If this Ivar be her son, why then he is Harold's heir and rightful monarch of this realm. I should be subject, he my king! He must be banished, or he must die. Our very throne is in peril. Even Magnus noticed how Ivar hath Harold's look. How long shall it be before Magnus suspects that Ivar may be Harold's son?"

He determined to rid himself of Ivar without delay. Accordingly, he repaired to the Hall of Audience and sent for Ivar to appear before him.

Wildred and several courtiers were grouped about the king when Ivar entered, modest of mien, but looking every inch the noble knight. The youth halted at the steps of the dais, and bent one knee to the monarch.

"Ivar," said the king, "charges have been made against you that you have conspired against the peace of this realm and the safety of our royal person. What have you to say to them?"

Ivar stood amazed.

"Your majesty," he said, commanding himself, "these charges are base as false, I pray

you to bring me face to face with my accusers."

"I accuse the knight Ivar," cried Wildred. "He hath often spoken to me in treacherous terms of our royal master. Only last night he said that when Prince Magnus should be king in my lord's stead, he—Ivar—should receive a great estate. Ivar hath fermented hatred of Reginald. This I swear!"

The courtiers murmured against the accused knight.

"You hear?" cried the king, with well-simulated passion. "You are accused of treason, Sir Ivar, by a true and honourable knight of the realm. We need have no trial before the deacons: of a crime committed against our royal person."

"But, my lord," cried Ivar, "this Wildred speaks false. I am no traitor. I never said the words he puts in my mouth!"

"If my words need corroboration, your majesty," said Wildred, "my esquire heard Ivar speak his treason."

The esquire was summoned. He had learned his part and confirmed the story of Wildred.

"The case is clearly proven against Ivar," pronounced Reginald. "You, Sir Ivar, are adjudged guilty of high treason. And I herewith banish you from this island. If you return at any time, any subject shall have authority to kill you at sight! Ho, there! Let the officers enter!"

Four stout men appeared.

"It is dusk," said Reginald. "The night has fallen. Have a boat prepared, with store of provisions, and set this traitor adrift. Be lively!"

Ivar made indignant protest, but his words were unheeded. Then he begged to be permitted to see the Lady Matilda, but this was refused him. The four officers seized him, and he was borne away, Wildred and the courtiers following to see the sentence duly executed.

They carried Ivar to the beach. A sailboat was procured, and a scanty store of food was put in it. The youth was then placed in the little craft, and his enemies entered another boat and towed him far out to the very entrance of the bay.

"You can make sail for England, Ireland or Scotland, Sir Ivar," then said the leader of the four officers. "But dare not return to Man, else your life will pay the forfeit. Go!"

They loosed his boat, and turned their own vessel homewards. And Ivar, exiled from home and love, was left alone in the darkness, was adrift upon the black and heaving waters!

CHAPTER VI.

The high-handed proceeding of King Reginald, in thus summarily disposing of the young knight Ivar, had not been without frequent parallels in the course of his two years' reign. In those days, might made right, and a king was absolute in his dominions. The only remedy that lay in the power of the people against tyranny and injustice was that of rising in a body against the oppressor.

This remedy had been frequently resorted to in Man, as witness the history of the reign of that Reginald—the uncle of the Reginald of our story—who perished in a battle with a portion of his outraged subjects—and as witness also the history of other kings of Man.

The proceeding, therefore, of the king was not likely to excite public sympathy in favour of Ivar.

The knights whom our hero had conquered were very bitter against him. They were all powerful, with trains of followers, and their influence would all be cast in favour of Reginald.

The knight Ranulph, Ivar's early protector, was bedridden and helpless, in his remote residence.

Prince Magnus, by very reason of the charges against Ivar, might be prevented from taking up his defence, since to befriend an accused traitor would be to lay himself liable to the charge of being himself a traitor.

All these reflections passed through the mind

of Ivar during his transportation over the waters of the bay.

He could scarcely realise the change that had come over his fortunes.

Only a few hours ago he was the conqueror in the tournament, the hero of the populace, complimented by the king, the recipient of the favour of the Queen of Love and Beauty. And now he was an exile forbidden to return to Man under penalty of death! What reverse could be more absolute?

The sail flapped noiselessly against the mast. The night had come on dark and gloomy, with black scudding clouds, a rising wind, and a black and heaving sea. The lights of Castle Rushen glimmered through the gloom, far across the bay.

Seaward all was darkness and peril. Ivar stood up and looked around him in all directions with a keen and flashing glance.

"They think that I will head for Ireland, or England or Scotland," he said aloud, while a smile of bitterness curled his lips. "They little know me. I shall return to Man, whatever the penalty. But before they exact the penalty they must catch me!"

The boat that had conveyed him out of the bay was now out of sight upon its return to the shore.

"I am tempted to return openly and boldly, and deliver myself up to the authorities, and demand a trial before the deemsters," he said. "Yet, if I did, that false knight and arrant knave, Wildred, with his esquire, would swear away my life, and I should lose my head. No, I will return secretly. I will see Matilda. We will fly together to England. With her, even exile would be sweet!"

He was now far outside the bay, drifting with the current. The time was come for action. He set his sail, trimming it to suit the wind, and went scudding away like a seagull.

He knew the coast as thoroughly as any fisher.

Rounding the promontory known as Scarlet Point, he headed his craft for the Pool Vash.

An hour's swift bounding over the waves brought him far within the bay, and close up under the rocks of the coast.

Somewhere on the borders of the Pool Vash, as he well knew, was a small, deep inlet, protected and nearly hidden by two tall masses of rocks.

The inlet would afford a safe refuge for his boat, where even the most prying eye would fail to detect it.

Slackening his speed and proceeding more cautiously, he carefully felt his way along the coast, and succeeded in finding the mouth of the inlet.

Lowering his sail he seized the oars and shot into the inlet, and crept along in the shadow of the overhanging rocks.

A few minutes' rowing brought him to a bend in the narrow inlet, and a minute later he had passed behind the bend, and his boat was safely hidden in a little nook that was dusky even in the daytime, a lonely recess which was seldom if ever visited by other than outlaws, and not often even by them.

Securing the little craft here Ivar climbed the jutting rocks, finding crevices for hands and feet with difficulty; but at last he reached the top.

And now what was he to do? With all his bravery he could be prudent, and he deemed it necessary to seek some disguise before venturing among his enemies.

His henchman, Mower, with the exception of the officer of the guards at Castle Rushen, who was a kinsman of Ranulph, was the only man in all the island whom he felt that he could trust implicitly, now that he was under the ban of the king's sentence.

This man, Mower, had been attached to his service for years.

He had come originally from a humble home upon the mountain side not two hours' walk from the Pool Vash.

After his master's disappearance, Mower would

have been likely to return to this home at once.

What could tempt him to remain among hostile people over night after his master's banishment?

Thus reasoning, Ivar determined to see Mower in his own home, and obtain from him a disguise. He set out immediately upon his journey.

"It might be well to send Mower to the Lady Matilda with a message," he thought, as he strode forward. "I must get word to her that I am still upon the island. We must meet before the king can persecute her with his suit, as I am sure he intends to do. I will disguise myself and go to Castle Rushen," he decided. "I will see Crovan, the officer of the guards. He is my good friend and will help me."

He hurried onward over the rough road, over fissures and pitfalls, and up the mountain side, arriving before midnight at a lonely cabin set in the midst of trees.

The cabin was lighted and sounds of voices came from within.

As Ivar approached the door he saw that Mower was within, and that he had evidently just arrived.

The henchman was telling his story to his family, who were loud in their expressions of grief at the supposed fate of Ivar.

The young knight advanced boldly and knocked upon the door. Mower came forward, recognised his master, and greeted him with astonishment and joy.

Ivar was brought within the cabin, food was placed before him, and he told the brief story of his adventures to a sympathising audience.

Afterwards the young knight and Mower conferred together, and Ivar told his plans and solicited aid.

"I can give you the disguise you want, master," said the man; "but it will be wise to remain here until to-morrow evening. No harm can come to the Lady Matilda before that time, and the king will have become secure in your absence. You cannot arrive at Castle Rushen, if you start now, much before daybreak. Crovan will be asleep, and you can do nothing."

The advice was good, but Ivar decided not to follow it. His natural impatience was too great to be easily curbed.

"I can arrive at Castle Rushen in two hours' time, or very soon after two o'clock," he said. "I must go."

"Then," said Mower, yielding, "I shall go with you. I must tell you, sir, that the Lady Matilda heard of your exile and attempted to leave the royal castle to return to her own; but the king commanded her to remain, and put a guard under her window and another in the corridor outside her door, and she is now virtually a prisoner."

This intelligence fired Ivar to immediate action. He hastened to assume a disguise, and then hurried forth, accompanied by Mower, upon his journey to Castle Rushen.

Their speed was so impetuous that it was not two o'clock when they crossed the moat and entered the court-yard of the royal castle.

The lights had long since been extinguished, with the exception of certain lanterns that burned all night. Leaving Mower in a place of safety, although he begged to be allowed to accompany his master, Ivar went on alone.

He knew in what portion of the castle the Lady Matilda was lodged. He made his way thither in the gloom. A guard was pacing to and fro over the pavement under her windows, his spear in position, and Ivar paused in the shadow to contemplate him.

He was a burly fellow, dressed in the uniform of the horse guards. As the young knight watched him a brilliant idea came to him.

Moving away noiselessly, he passed around the nearest angle of the building, and made his way to one of the castle doors in that portion of the structure.

As it happened, someone had recently passed out of that door and it had been left ajar. Ivar entered the castle silently and crept along the halls and passages, now dark and deserted, in the direction of Matilda's rooms.

The corridor outside her chamber was safely gained; and now Ivar heard the stately tramp of a man on guard as he paced up and down the passage.

A lantern hung against the wall, and by its feeble glimmer the young knight beheld the guard, a young man about his own size, dressed in the uniform of the horse guards.

The situation was desperate. After a moment's hesitation, Ivar decided what to do. He stole into a niche, where a statue had formerly belonged, and waited for the guard's approach. He was armed with a billet of wood, and this he held in his hand ready for use.

As the guard came abreast of him Ivar sprang out upon him like a tiger, felling him to the floor with his billet, and in the same blow striking him senseless.

To bind and gag the guard were his next movements. He had brought appliances for this very purpose, and the man was presently bound and perfectly helpless.

Before the process of binding had been quite completed Ivar removed the outer garments of the guard. He then dragged his prisoner to a closet off the hall and thrust him within. To don the uniform was the next step, and he presented a very good counterpart, when fully dressed and equipped, of the king's minion whose place he had usurped.

The noise occasioned by this proceeding had aroused someone within Matilda's room, as he could hear, but had not penetrated to any other portion of the castle.

"I am safe now in this disguise," thought Ivar, "should anyone enter the corridor for a gossip with the guard. And now for Matilda. She a prisoner in the king's castle—she, a noble heiress, treated like a felon! The tyrant shall learn that Matilda is not friendless, if she is an orphan."

He approached the door and tapped lightly upon it. He heard a stir within her chamber.

"Matilda!" he called, softly, through the key-hole. "Matilda!"

"Who is there?" called the sweet, frightened voice of the maiden. "What do you want at this unseemly hour?"

"Matilda!" called the young knight, eagerly, "it is I, Ivar."

A quick, glad cry came from the maiden as she hastened to undo the bolts and bars that guarded her door. The Lady Godiva's voice was heard as the venerable spinster assisted her.

The door flew open, and Matilda and her aunt stood upon the threshold. The eyes of love penetrated Ivar's disguise at a glance, and the lovers were clasped in each other's arms.

And just then, in the very midst of their embrace, came the tramping of feet and the flashing of lights, and King Reginald, attended by a servant, entered the corridor.

The king had found himself unable to sleep, and had proposed to himself to pay a visit, even at this unfitting hour, to his beautiful captive.

Ivar was disposed of, he thought; the maiden was in his power. A visit to her in the dead hour of night might show her his power and induce her to consent to his suit to save herself from his vengeance.

At the sound of Reginald's step Ivar started back, and his hand flew to the guard's weapon which he had usurped.

"What, ho!" cried Reginald, amazed at the sight of the open door, the maiden, and the guard; "what does this mean? Answer, varlet, or your head will pay the forfeit!"

(To be Continued.)

In consequence of an accession of funds, the council of the Printers' Corporation recently determined to elect three orphans, the successful candidates being James Francis Wheeler, Mina Selina Usher, and Sarah Eleanor Robinson.

Dr. FRANKLAND again complains of the water supplied by the five companies drawing from the Thames as being of inferior quality, and of the Lambeth water as turbid and containing moving organisms. The Lea waters were last month good, and had been efficiently filtered.



[WOMAN'S WORK.]

HER FORTUNE.

THE June sun blazed down on the unsheltered platform. Beside it the long express train seemed to pant with a cindery heat of its own. From the windows tired and dusty faces looked languidly out with that dull resignation born of a long journey on a hot day.

"A case of premature interment."

Dr. Thorpe, half asleep with his head against a window, heard the words because they trenched somewhat on his own profession. The speakers were out of sight on the platform below.

"What do you mean?"

"She has gone to—I don't remember. A place no one ever heard of before. She was going to Newport with my sisters, and changed her mind at the last minute."

"Miss Nelson is a young lady of infinite variety. She is doing simplicity now by way of a change, I suppose," with a little sneer in the languid tones.

"She can afford whims better than most girls. It's a deuced nuisance keeping up with them, though," with a low-toned drawl.

John Thorpe was a country doctor coming home from a medical convention in a far-off city.

Such opportunities were rare in his life. He had made the most of this one, working day and night with a fierce kind of energy—sleeping now

to make up for it, as doctors learn to do. He was young, had heart, brains, and a nervous organisation like a woman's. Moreover he was poor, and his poverty cramped and rasped him, which process improved neither his temper nor his manners.

A week after Mrs. Rood sent for him professionally.

The season was sickly, and Dr. Thorpe's practice was growing.

There was a young woman in the room with the ailing child.

A stranger had the child in her arms. She bowed gravely and quietly to the unannounced doctor.

"Mrs. Rood has lain down. She was up all last night. Shall I call her?"

Dr. Thorpe started with a little thrill of repulsion.

Another one of those unaccented voices toned down to an expressionless serenity that is a calm reproach to anything like animation. According to his code, in a man it meant puppyism, in a woman heartlessness.

So when he answered, his own voice had its most abrupt inflections.

"It is not necessary. Let her sleep while she can. This child has scarlet fever."

He saw her start.

He had not much charity for young lady terrors.

"If you have any fear of the disease you had better go away at once. It is an aggravated form of the disorder."

There was a sudden widening of the eyes and raising of the heavy brows.

Apparently that manner of address was new to her.

The doctor did not know, to do him justice, what savage impatience there was in his speech.

"I am not afraid," she answered, with a shade more of impassive coldness. "You may give me your directions."

So he gave his directions, and went away with a vague sense of general irritation.

At his next visit Mrs. Rood bethought herself, and pronounced the formula of introduction.

"Dr. Thorpe, this is my friend Miss Nelson."

He bowed frigidly and awkwardly. The name conveyed nothing.

Hundreds of other interests had overlaid what might have been an association.

Miss Nelson went out of the room for goblets and spoons.

"Miss Nelson is an old friend. She has come here for change and rest. Baby's sickness is so unfortunate. You and she should be friends. She is worth it."

Dr. Thorpe smiled rather grimly. He had a sense that they had begun unfavourably. He reflected that he might have indulged in more agreeable manners if the circumstances of his life had not kept him in a fever fret of cramps and limitations half the time. He almost forgave her her voice. There must be a good many hours of every day when no such low-pitched speech was possible.

The doctor had another charming characteristic—a direct result of his poverty. He distrusted everybody who was not poor. I am aware that that does not argue the strongest or healthiest type of man. But he was very much like the rest of mankind, nowhere near perfection, and the sharpest edge of that failing was turned toward himself.

He behaved worse with women than with men. He had yet to learn that "the rank is but the guinea stamp" in more than one sense.

Having acquitted Miss Nelson of the crime of pecuniary independence, he could afford to analyse his reasons for disliking her. One morning he found Mrs. Rood crouched on the nursery floor, limp, nerveless, forlorn.

"What is it?" he asked, fearing some new demand for his professional skill.

"Imogene has left," in a voice so strengthless that he measured utter discouragement.

Imogene was Mrs. Rood's servant girl, who had always held the factories in the neighbouring town as a reserve threat in case of difference of opinion between her and her mistress.

Miss Nelson stood beside her friend, a curious look of amazed bewilderment on her own face. She met the doctor's eyes with an expression that had a glimpse of fun in it.

"We had a little scene. She did not agree to stay where there was any illness," she said.

The doctor turned away to the four little cots. His own face grew very grave over them.

"You do not expect Mr. Rood?" he said to Miss Nelson, summoning her out of the room by a look.

"Not for another month. We do not even know where to write him. Are they going to die?" a sudden alarm quivering in her voice.

"Harry is, I fear." Harry was the youngest; always delicate, he had grown into the nearest place in the mother heart. "You must be quiet," a tone of command in his voice as he saw her lips quiver.

"It will kill her."

"No," he said, gravely. "But I did not want you wholly unprepared. I think I can send or bring you a woman who will do what you tell her in the kitchen."

"I cannot tell her anything," she said, humbly. "I am very sorry, but I do not know."

She stood with a little droop of the graceful

neck, a deprecating bend of the whole slight figure.

"You will have to trust her skill, then. She is very kind-hearted, and will do her best, and you must take care of Mrs. Rood in what is coming."

The little one died that night. Dr. Thorpe coming in quietly, found Miss Nelson holding the child in her arms. He saw the end was at hand. Mrs. Rood was sleeping the sleep of utter exhaustion on a lounge in the room. He spoke to her gently.

"What is it?" wildly starting up. And then the mother instinct comprehended all the dread, and a wail rang through the room.

"My baby—my baby!"

As if the cry had disturbed the dying child, the little hands were flung up in a spasm of a struggle for breath, two or three gasps convulsed the whole form, and then the muscles relaxed, and the sufferer was still.

"It is all over, dear," Miss Nelson said, rising with the breathless body in her arms. "See, Fanny, he is out of pain."

She was very pale, but she was quite quiet, and she kept Mrs. Rood almost calm, too. For that the doctor was thankful. Women's tears hurt him all the more that he was too shy and self-conscious to attempt a word of comfort.

The night of the funeral—breathless, sultry, lowering—he reached Mrs. Rood's just after midnight. Miss Nelson was as usual in the sick-room.

The dim yellow light of the night-lamp as she bent within its circle made her face look pinched and hollow. The white wrapper she wore, coming close up about the throat, made him think of a shroud. He volunteered his first words of remonstrance.

"You are making yourself ill. You have no right to overtax yourself as you are doing."

"Dr. Thorpe must allow that I am the best judge of my own powers of endurance," with cold, ungracious surprise.

But as if the little flash of angry vexation made the feather's weight on the side of all those days and nights of sleepless fatigue, Dr. Thorpe felt his head going. He walked unsteadily out into the dark passage, and stood there leaning against the wall, a deadly faintness drowning his senses.

A hand touched his arm. A voice low and imperative commanded him.

"You are ill. Take this chair."

He sank blindly and meekly into the seat provided.

A glass touched his lips.

He had sense enough to swallow a draught fiery strong that stung him into a consciousness that Miss Nelson was standing beside him, looking preternaturally tall and straight, watching him grave-faced.

"You are worn out. You must not go away now."

Something inarticulate, to which she paid no manner of heed, struggled to his lips.

She opened a door near him, and spoke with authority.

"Go in here and lie down. I will call you at five o'clock."

John Thorpe obeyed, and in three minutes was drowned in a deep-flowing, dreamless tide of slumber.

He came to the surface once just enough to know that someone was spreading over him some soft light covering.

"Doctor."

The single word brought him quite to himself.

The demands of his art had cultivated the gift of recalling his senses all at once.

"It is five o'clock. Mrs. Matthews has something for you in the dining-room."

He ate his steak and drank his coffee all the better that Miss Nelson did not come near him. Mrs. Matthews made remarks and asked questions with beautiful unrestraint. At last she said:

"Who is she, anyhow, doctor?"

"Who is who?"

"Miss Nelson. I can't make her out. A body might think she had been used to everything,

from the way she speaks and looks, and as near as I can find out she can't cook anything."

"How does she look and speak?" curious to compare impressions.

"Well, you know in that softly way that wouldn't wake a baby, and I should no more think of not minding than if she held a gun at my head. And the way she keeps Fanny Rood out of hysterics is just past all telling wonderful. She makes me think of one of them queens, all but her clothes."

She made John Thorpe "think of one of them queens," clothes and all. The soft rustle of her garments over the matted floors thrilled him with a consciousness that other women's approaches never did.

Whether it was liking or disliking he had not yet defined to himself.

It was power, certainly, and a new power to him.

By-and-bye Mrs. Rood's little ones passed the crisis of their illness and entered on convalescence. That was before the typhoid in the valley had reached its height. One evening, in the dusk, as the doctor entered John Schubert's house, he heard a voice singing.

Schubert was a stalwart German who, having fought through the war and outlived bullets and stockade starvation, had fallen before the stealthy poison of the swampland he was trying to drain. His illness had been terrible. His fair-haired wife knelt rigid and still beside the bed.

On the other side, holding the dying man's hand, stood Miss Nelson. He thought only of some angel as he looked at her. Her tones did not falter as she sang more and more softly, as the ebbing breath came slower, the German hymn of which a few hoarse words had crossed his lips. And then she stopped as the nerveless hand fell away from hers, and passed the doctor going out.

Neighbours had come in. There was no more need of either. Thorpe followed her out into the open air.

"Wait," he said, "and I will take you home."

Beside him in the carriage she sat, very still, every line of the fine thin face sharpened and intensified. Only a sentence or two was spoken.

"I cannot let you take this risk without understanding what you are doing. It is typhoid—peculiarly deadly in its results."

"I know." Her voice seemed to deepen where other women's grew high and shrill with excitement. "Do not hinder me. I was never of use before. If I can help you at all, command me. I will obey you."

He bowed silently. After that he was hardly at a bedside that he did not meet her also. He put out of question all personal thought of her safety. He understood better than some what these slender women with colourless faces are capable of. She did not spare herself, and he followed her lead. They never spoke a word unconnected with their work.

Then when the worst was over he found himself temporarily homeless. Mrs. Rood swung open her hospitable doors, and he entered.

Miss Nelson sat one morning busy with her ivory hook and a tangle of bright wools. At her feet two of the little Roods sat watching her fingers. As she wrought she sang to a little ripple of a nursery tune, over and over, a non-sense song.

Dr. Thorpe, behind the morning paper, watched her with a gathering frown. With gathering discontent he watched the deft brown fingers at their task. Presently he put down his paper with a rustle.

She looked up at him.

"The doctor doesn't like us, babies. We shall have 'to go to the land where the bong tree grows.'"

It was so seldom that she showed the least disposition to mischief, that John Thorpe, quite disconcerted, coloured, and had consciously to rally his forces.

"No, Miss Nelson; but I cannot bear, knowing of what you are capable, to see you worse than wasting your time."

"I do not see the waste," grave enough now. "Fanny is in the kitchen, and these little ones, not very strong yet, must be amused."

He had nothing to say to that.

"And as to the work. You do not like that. I am knitting a ball for Carl here, who is never going to be so wise, I hope, that he cannot see more than one way of being busy and useful," smiling down on the little fellow.

But the smile was quite gone from eyes and lips when she looked up again.

"We live in two different worlds, Dr. Thorpe. Try and understand that such a fact may make two different sets of laws necessary."

He bowed and took up his paper. It was seldom that she spoke as many sentences as that. After that he certainly did not hear as many words for three days.

He never guessed that hour by hour he was learning every trick of speech and look. Sometimes, when her lips and eyes smiled together, as they did now and then, it was worth days of waiting. He went on watching her, studying with unconscious intentness—the intentness of a first experience of the ways and manners of a woman who had the reputation of being the most fascinating woman of her set.

One day, a July afternoon, sitting on the low doorstep with her lap full of intense, strong-hued colours, Dr. Thorpe came in from a drive that had lasted since early morning. He was hungry and hot and dusty; he had seen some of the most sordid forms of want in his day's round. She sat there cool and elegant and at leisure. She did not even turn her eyes toward him.

"Miss Nelson," he said, abruptly, "I wish you would sing for me."

Now it had been at least twenty-four hours since either had given the first sign of knowledge of the other's existence. Dr. Thorpe did not often risk refusal of a favour. She appreciated the man's state of mind better than even himself. Who can say that there was no slightest touch of coquetry in what she did? She knew that a wrong move then would harden him into fixed antagonism, perhaps for ever. Assuredly she did not want that. She showed no surprise; she did not change a muscle, not even to call her eyes from their dreamy survey of the sunny garden. She sang—the German hymn she had sung over John Schubert's death-bed.

"Thank you."

The doctor's voice was hoarse. She bent her head mutely, and rising, floated away.

Franky Rood had a genius for inventing household panics. As a last device, he set himself on fire.

Dr. Thorpe came in just as he was extinguished. Mrs. Matthews had put him out with a flood of cold water, which had frightened him as much as the flames. So he was shrieking with redoubled violence, and Mrs. Rood, with shaking hands, was trying to ascertain the extent of his injuries.

The doctor's entrance quieted him. Besides a scorched and blackened set of clothes there was no harm done. Mrs. Rood sat down on the floor in the midst of the deluge and sobbed out:

"Franky Rood, I have a great mind—a great mind to whip you. You are not hurt at all."

Whereupon the doctor laughed in his infrequent hearty fashion, and the child, not quite understanding wherein he had failed in meeting his mother's expectations, crept away abashed from the sight of her grief.

He came back again, bestowing apprehensive glances on his still tearful mother.

"Something ails her," pointing through the open door. "You'd better see to her," wisely.

On the porch Miss Nelson stood blue-white and trembling.

"What is the matter?"

She held out a scorched and blistered hand.

"I hate to be hurt," she said, savagely.

Before the dressing was done he was almost as white as she. She winced under the torture, but she did not utter a sound. At

the end she asked if the hand would be badly scarred.

His lip curled a little at the vanity of her kind. It is doubtful if she saw the expression, for she dropped forward against his shoulder in a dead faint.

"Queen Esther's pretty much like the rest of 'em when anything is the matter," Mrs. Matthews said. "If I couldn't behave better than that, I would be ashamed of myself. But it makes a difference whether you are twenty and pretty, or fifty and homely as a hedge fence."

The doctor occupied vantage ground. He was patient—quite; his very wisest and best. Now that she showed the need of support he forgot everything but that need. "Once more he forgot himself, this time not to do, but to talk much and well. He was a country doctor, badly dressed, awkward, and uncomfortably truthful, but Miss Nelson was conscious of a growing admiration for him. She honestly tried to please him.

"It's very ungrateful of me, Fanny," Miss Nelson said, "but I get so tired of myself. And I've got nothing but my past misdeeds to think of."

"You will be sorry you came to us."

"No, I've never regretted it. You know that. I am glad to know Doctor Thorpe, for one thing. He is not just like all the rest. I wonder what the world would do for him if he were set among other men."

"Men would do less for him than women. I think he will get his education that way," venturing an obscure note of warning.

Miss Nelson smiled mischievously.

"He is too masterful. He cuts down through social fictions in a way that frightens me. He isn't afraid of me, for a comfort."

"No, he isn't afraid."

"You know how I hate it, Fanny," real feeling trembling in her voice. "It has been like a horrible nightmare in my life ever since I thought about it—my money and the difference it makes. I should be glad to be worth nothing. I can live quite well, be perfectly happy without spending anything. It is of so little consequence to me, and it seems to be worth so much to other people."

Mrs. Rood sighed under her breath. Money was worth a great deal indeed to her. It meant leisure and her husband's companionship, and time to keep the fresh graces of her youth, vanishing now before hard work and anxiety.

"And there's one man to whom money does not make such an all-prevailing good that he can see no fault behind it. I am bad-tempered and haughty and I have no feeling, and I waste my time on trifles, and he lets me know that he knows it. I think him very heroic, but it isn't necessary that he should know that I do."

"Be careful."

"Of what? I shall not fall in love with him," half regretfully. "And he never will with me, I'm so wicked."

One day the two drifted on the discussion of various surface social questions. Mrs. Rood came through the hall just in time to hear Dr. Thorpe expressing himself.

"For my part, I do not see how a poor man can marry a rich wife. He must be very brave or very mean. Very mean usually, since human nature is what it is."

"Very mean? Yes, I grant you that, and cowardly, too, to think of the money at all. I should despise a man if he let my fortune stand in his way."

Mrs. Rood stepped softly back the way she had come. She did not choose to face either of them just then. But nothing came of it. Dr. Thorpe had only a little attack of his old displeasure. The "I" and "my" were purely supposititious pronouns.

"When will my hand be quite well? I must have it by the first of September," she said to him, abruptly, as he was going away.

"In six days? I fear the thing is impossible. You don't want scars, you know. Cannot you stay longer?"

"Absolutely no longer."

The next day Miss Nelson strolled down to the edge of a brook that ran through the grounds.

She had her book—as a pretence, perhaps. She was pale, looked wearied—not particularly good-tempered. The steps that broke through her reverie brought Dr. Thorpe to her side.

"I have been to the house. Mrs. Rood sent me here to find you."

On his face was a look that he took to the operating-table when all his skill would be required of him.

Perhaps Miss Nelson had rather have suffered interruption from any other source. As she had said, she was half afraid of this man, and just now she was conscious of not wishing him to see her as she saw herself. But there was no trepidation in her face or voice as she rose and greeted him. She did not choose that he should seat himself.

"Shall we go back to the house? I was just beginning to tire of this."

He was not a man to hesitate long about what he had resolved upon.

"Wait one minute, please."

And then he paused. Before he spoke again he removed his hat and stood with it in his hand.

"Miss Nelson, I am a very poor man, and as such have perhaps no right to say this to you; but I find myself compelled. You have seen me at my best. I have known almost nothing of the graces and elegancies of life. Last night I discovered that I love you."

He stood there with his blanched face awaiting judgment. She was nearly as tall as he, and now, as she stood a little higher than he, her eyes were quite on a level with his. But she did not look at him while he spoke. It was perhaps the most awkward presentation of the subject she had ever listened to, but she had not the least disposition to laugh. Something in his eyes, in the huskily-constrained voice, filled her with quite a different emotion. She had some difficulty in finding words herself. She forced herself to meet his eyes when she did speak.

"I am very sorry you have said this. There is a reason why I cannot listen. Believe me when I say I had no thought of this 'anxiously.' It seemed so utterly out of the possibilities."

She was only trying to justify herself. To him it seemed like reproof for his presumption.

"I am sorry to have troubled you," slowly. "I suppose I knew before you spoke," with a sigh. "No, I do not blame you."

She stood very still, breathlessly still. She wished he would go away or speak. She had no word at her command, and she could not have trusted her voice if there had been.

Men of his make are not given to melodrama. He resumed his professional tones when he spoke again.

"I am going away to-morrow. I may not see you again. You will not think I am intruding advice," with a faint smile, "if I say you ought not to go back into that drudgery."

"I do not understand," after a minute's puzzled silence.

"Teaching will not kill you at once. But the life will be slow suicide."

The bewilderment in her face gave him his first intimation of a possible mistake.

"You teach, do you not?"

"No, Dr. Thorpe," very gently.

But he asked no more questions. It did not matter to him. She was outside his life. He had not yet quite got his senses after the blow. He left her presently, and went away down the dusty, glaring road.

He did not leave town next day. Somebody's sudden illness detained him. He told himself that the burned hand was not yet beyond need of care. He would see her just once more.

He entered the house unannounced, as was his custom. A pompous lady showily attired passed him in the hall. In the parlour beyond Miss Nelson stood talking gaily. There was no danger that even the doctor's untrained eyes would fancy inexpensive simplicity in her dress now. One hand was bandaged still, but on the other—the left—flashed a great solitaire diamond. She gave him that hand now as she

came forward trailing the lustrous lengths of her rustling dress, smiling still as she greeted him.

He bowed in his ungraceful way as she presented him to the man who was lazily scrutinising him. That personage acknowledged the introduction with half-insolent ease, and said, as he sauntered out:

"I'll be back presently, Ruth, with the horses."

It came back like a flash to Thorpe. The very voice with its languid drawl—"a case of premature interment." This, then, was the resurrection. The doctor was capable of righteous indignation in full measure. He turned to Miss Nelson. She was standing as her hand had dropped from his with an air of waiting. The smile had gone from her lips; her eyes were weary with the shadows that had made them so heavy in the days when he had first known her. But not the less did the words come.

"It was hardly worth your while, I think. A country doctor is surely beneath your mark."

The words were quietly said, but they stung a flash of red into her face.

"Not more unworthy than Dr. Thorpe's taunt," sadly.

Mrs. Rood explained penitently, when she saw him again:

"I had no idea she was engaged to Harry Dawes. I am so sorry, John."

Two years later John Thorpe landed in Liverpool, coming home from the foreign hospitals, where his success and reputation had been steadily growing. A year before Mrs. Rood had written him that the engagement between Miss Nelson and Harry Dawes had been finally dissolved three months before.

He had held himself rigidly still against all yearning and impulse all the months that had come; perhaps indeed it would be all the more faithful and rigidly well done; but his path would always lie through shadows if she failed him. Not in loving, so much as in realising his ideal.

He reached her home after the shortest interval that would permit decent preparations for the visit. He was taciturn still, stern and quiet; he would not be a shining light on the tide of fashion, but he was neither awkward nor shy.

He found the house in a blaze of light; velvets and laces were trailing up the steps. Clearly a great party was in progress. He glanced down at his attire, hardly suitable for the occasion. Somehow he felt that to turn away now would be to invite his own defeat. He put his hand to his breast pocket, feeling there Mr. Rood's letter. Then he entered with the others.

He bowed before her as she stood receiving her guests. Over her proud face ran a flash of colour and light. That was all the sign of surprise she gave.

There were too many people about them for much speech. He said quietly bending over her hand:

"I have come unbidden, but it was you that brought me."

And she answered him with an entire composure:

"You are more than welcome. I knew you would come. Do not go away again."

After the last formal leavetaking one guest remained. The two stood together in the brilliant empty rooms—she in her costly laces, he in his last-year's coat.

"I wanted something more than the farewell that all the others shared. Pardon me."

She turned a sunny face toward him, a great gladness in eyes and lips.

"I am too glad for many words, but you shall have your own special personal adieu. Good-night, Dr. Thorpe."

"Not yet. You know why I have come. I am not afraid of you now, nor—of your money."

She raised a warning hand.

"Let me forget it for a little. And now good morning, Dr. Thorpe."
He paused an instant, bent and touched her lips.
"Good-night, beloved," and so passed out into the new day. H. L.

FACETIÆ.

BALLAD FOR JOHN BULL.

Air: "Sally in our Alley."
Of all the folks in purse that smart
I best know money's valley;
My pocket lies so near my heart—
I do hate that Shere Ali!
I ne'er enjoy a mind serene
On any blessed one day;
Not e'en on that which comes between
The Saturday and Monday.
Those telegraphs, they break my rest;
From one ere I can rally,
Another comes about that pest
Of pests, Ameer Shere Ali!
But, for a hundred million pounds,
I must not shilly-shally;
With Russia close behind his bounds
"Twon't do to stand Shere Ali.

—Punch.

The very latest great "show-up"—The electric light.
—Judy.

ON THE MEND.

MASTER TOM (who has been from home):
"Well, Simmons, how are you getting on? All right?"

SIMMONDS: "Yes, sir. But this fox-hound puppy has been and killed a lot o' chickens."

MASTER TOM: "I am glad to hear that. I thought he was going to die of distemper."

—Punch.

THE MAIN CHARGE.

WISTFUL MATERFAMILIAS (reading evening payer): "Here's another of those Allington girls married!—and to that young Carew, of the Grange, of all people! How well those girls go off, to be sure!"

PATERFAMILIAS: "Ah, awfully good-looking girls those Allingtons."

MATERFAMILIAS (severely): "It's not the good looks. 'It's because they're so well brought up!"

CHORUS OF DAUGHTERS: "Oh, do bring us up well, mamma dear!"

—Punch.

JUDGING BY APPEARANCES.

UNDERSIZED YOUTH: "Now, then, first return, Surbiton, and look sharp! How much?"

CLERK: "Three shillings. Half-price under twelve!"

—Punch.

LYTTON'S LAST.—How to keep the Frontier out of hot water.—Get rid of all the Khans.
—Punch.

A CHILDISH DISTINCTION.

SISTER: "You should not be sorry, Johnny: I never was sorry when I had to go to school."

BROTHER: "That's because you were a girl: you would have been very sorry if you had been a little boy."

—Fun.

STATISTICS.

THEATRE BURNING.—A few statistics, taken from the list of theatres destroyed by fire, contained in the work of Herr Fölsch, will teach us, if instruction were needed, how highly dangerous our modern stages are. Nearly every theatre in London and Paris has been burnt down in its turn, in London alone to the number of 31. During the last thirty years 37 fires were officially recorded in London, and a great many fire alarms may have never come to the knowledge of the authorities. Of 252 theatres, there have been burnt down, 5 before opening, 70 in the first five years after opening, 38 in from six

to ten years after opening, 45 in from eleven to twenty years after opening, 27 in from twenty-one to thirty years after opening, 12 in from thirty-one to forty years after opening, 20 in from forty-one to fifty years after opening, 17 in from fifty-one to sixty years after opening, 7 in from sixty-one to eighty years after opening, 8 in from eighty-one to 100 years after opening, 3 upwards of 100 years after opening; total, 252. The above figures show that the average age of those theatres destroyed by fire amounts to about 22½ years. On the average about 13 theatres are destroyed each year, the worst months being from January to March, the fewest fires taking place in July to September. Most of them have taken place in the middle of the week, the most fatal days in the month being, strangely, the 8th, 15th, and 22nd. Fortunately, of the many conflagrations chronicled, only 36 broke out while representations were going on; but those have, on the other hand, been the most disastrous on record. Most of the fires took place in the middle of the night.

ONLY THIS.

ONLY this was all he said:

"I will ever love you, dearest;
Many, many may be near,
But I ever shall be nearest;
I shall ever strive to be,
By my conduct, worthy thee."

He could offer me no lands,

He could bring to me no treasure
Save his own right willing hands,
And his love of fullest measure;
He no jewels could bestow,
Yet I honoured him, I know.

Still there was a precious gem

Brought by him—he did not falter,
As with trembling hand he laid
It upon devotion's altar.
It was pure fidelity,
Pledged to ever changeless be.

I had faith that he would strive
E'er to keep that pledge unbroken;
I had faith that Truth had framed
Every sentence he had spoken;
I had faith that he would be
Ever true and good to me.

I accepted; we were wed;
Many years have since departed,
And I've always found that he
Ever has been faithful-hearted;
And I've always tried to be
Worthy him who's worthy me.

C. D.

GEMS.

GREAT talent renders a man famous, great merit procures respect, but kind feeling alone insures affection.

THE love of the beautiful and true, like the dewdrop in the heart of the crystal, remains for ever clear and liquid in the inmost shrine of the soul.

IF some persons were to bestow one half of their fortune in learning how to spend the other half, it would be money extremely well laid out.

AMIDST the most adverse circumstances there are still reasons for cheerfulness. So long as there are motives to gratitude, there is cause for cheerfulness.

A LOVING friend's rebuke sinks into the heart, and convinces the judgment; an enemy's or stranger's rebuke is invective and irritates, not converts.

HE who thinks he can find in himself the means of doing without others, is much mistaken; but he who thinks that others cannot do without him, is still more mistaken.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

IMITATION LEMON CREAM.—This will be useful where cream is not allowed, and is nourishing and delicious. Put into half a pint of boiling water the peel of two lemons, very thinly shred, and allow it to simmer for a quarter of an hour, then boil half a pound of sugar in it for ten minutes, strain it, add three eggs (the whites and yolks beaten together) and the juice of the lemons. Put the mixture into a bright stewpan and stir until thick; it will take about twenty minutes. Have ready a quarter of an ounce of gelatine, soaked in a spoonful of cold water, and when the cream is poured into a basin, put the gelatine with another spoonful of water into the stewpan, and stir about until dissolved, then mix thoroughly with the cream and put into a mould. It should stand until the next day.

MARKING INK WITHOUT NITRATE OF SILVER.—One drachm of aniline black is rubbed up with 60 drops of strong hydrochloric acid and one and a half oz. of alcohol. The resulting liquid is then to be diluted with a hot solution of one and a half drachms of gum arabic in 6 ozs. of water. This ink does not corrode steel pens; is affected neither by concentrated mineral acids nor by strong lye. If the aniline black solution is diluted with a solution of one and a half oz. of shellac in 6 ozs. of alcohol, instead of with gum water, an ink is obtained which, when applied to wood, brass, or leather is remarkable for its extraordinary black colour.

PRESERVATION OF FRUIT.—A. Dal Piaz recommends to lay the fruit in a solution of sugar mixed with salicylic acid. The proportions are 100–500 grammes sugar, two and a half to 3 grammes salicylic acid to 1 litre water. Cherries, raspberries, pears, grapes, etc., have been preserved in this manner for a year without losing their natural aroma.

MISCELLANEOUS.

REMEMBER what a world of gossip would be prevented if it was only remembered that a person who tells you of the faults of others, intends to tell others of your faults.

LORD DREBY has presented to the Manchester Conservative Club three elegantly-bound volumes, the two first being a copy of the *Iliad* of Homer rendered into English blank verse, and the third a series of "Translations of Poems Ancient and Modern," both works being by the late Earl of Derby.

A NUMEROUS meeting of gentlemen interested in the Bradford trade has been in the Townhall, under the presidency of the Mayor, Mr. B. Priestley, to consider the desirability of permanently establishing the recently formed and already flourishing Bradford Technical School by the erection of suitable buildings for its location, at an estimated cost of £25,000.

THE QUEEN, Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Lady Gwydyr, the Hon. Mrs. Baillie-Hamilton, the Earl of Stamford and Warrington, the Earl of Rosslyn, the Lord Chesham, were among the exhibitors at the third annual show recently held by the British Dairy Farmers' Association at the Agricultural Hall. The entries in the classes of cows, heifers, and bulls, number altogether 232, thus constituting the largest exhibition of prize and pedigree cattle ever held in the metropolis.

At a recent meeting of the executive committee of the Mansion House fund for the relief of distress occasioned by the sinking of the Princess Alice it was stated that the fund amounted to £34,300, that £13,000 had been distributed to widows and other relatives, and that the cases of one hundred orphans remained yet to be dealt with. In accordance with the expressed opinion of the meeting, that the fund subscribed was large enough, a resolution was submitted and carried for the purpose of closing the lists.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

WALTER.—If your father's reproofs were unjust and severe they furnished no reason for your impertinence and disobedience. It is permissible for a father to make a mistake in the exercise of his paternal duties, but a son's errors in perpetrating an act of disobedience only aggravate the fundamental offence.

BEN & TOM.—The letter does not disclose who is for whom.

BELLA.—The photographer, we are afraid, has not done you justice. By some mistake he must have used the wrong lens.

JANE.—Try a little brimstone and treacle every morning before breakfast.

ALICIA.—As jealousy is called the "green-eyed monster," it may be that that was the origin of assigning the colour green to the passion jealousy. But as the origin of such things is most always lost in obscurity, people must be liberal in their beliefs with regard to such matters, and not bring a remorseless spirit of critical investigation to bear upon them, to the great discomfort of warm-hearted young ladies.

CON.—It is fortunate that you awoke in time to the dangers of the path which you were so heedlessly pursuing, and it is not to be regretted that you now find yourself in the valley of humiliation. You should remember, however, that two roads lead even from that gloomy vale, one of them running straight up the heavenward side, and the other leading downward by devious courses to the pit of destruction.

EVELYN S. W.—A gentleman in saluting a lady should slightly raise his hat with his right hand. Gentlemen on meeting bow and shake hands.

K. P.—Hercules performed many other labours besides the celebrated twelve imposed on him. His slaying a great lion twice may account for asking about the thirteenth labour. Pan was a deity in ancient Greek mythology, and was supposed to be the son of Mercury, and to have for his worshippers shepherds and huntsmen.

N. E.—In this instance it is the duty of the gentleman to seek you, and if he does not do so you should not unsought be won.

JIM.—Apply to any music-seller; price about eighteen-pence.

ERNEST.—It is impossible for you to have proper medical advice unless you are actually seen by a physician or a surgeon.

WALTER.—In any case some sort of description is necessary.

KATHLEEN M.—Occupy your leisure hours with some study congenial to your taste, also indulge in some innocent relaxations, throw aside your hermit-morbidness, and your mind will become healthy and vigorous in a very short time.

ALFRED.—Prejudices are difficult to account for; we suppose they are a part of human nature. Those you allude to are extremely insignificant, and are to be excused on the ground of ignorance.

EMILY B.—A domestic servant, under notice to leave, cannot lawfully absent herself from her mistress's service without express permission, although for the purpose of looking out for another situation.

JOSEY.—Young ladies must not send presents to gentlemen friends or relatives, unless they have been accepted by their families as admirers or lovers. Sending even a newspaper to a casual gentleman acquaintance would be a breach of etiquette.

M. C.—The hair cannot be "made to grow" in the way you mention.

FERNET.—The only advice we can give you is to put your motto into practice and make inquiries wherever you can.

LOO.—Rare and exceptional cases might lead to an infringement of a rule.

NINA.—Your handwriting is not very good, but it exhibits no radical defects, and will improve if you are able to keep up your practice.

T. B.—A white tongue is usually considered to be the indication of a weak stomach, a remedy for which is often found in a suitable tonic medicine preceded by an aperient.

GEORGE.—As yet the time allowed us for decision is insufficient.

ANNIE T. and ROSE C., two friends, wish to correspond with two young men. A. T. is twenty, dark, good-looking. R. C. is eighteen, fair.

ELIZABETH W. and MARGUERITE C., two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. Elizabeth W. is twenty-three, tall, fair, light blue eyes. Marguerite C. is twenty-four, dark, medium height, and blue eyes. Respondents must be about the same age, fond of music.

BEATON, twenty-one, a domestic, dark hair, brown eyes, would like to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy.

MAUDE and LOUIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Maude is nineteen, brown hair, blue eyes. Louie is seventeen, fair, loving, blue eyes.

POLLY and MAGGIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Polly is tall, thoroughly domesticated. Maggie is fair, tall, and of a very loving disposition. Both are twenty-three.

T. P. and W. P., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. T. P. is twenty, medium height, dark hair and eyes, good-looking. W. P. is twenty-one, fond of home and music.

APHRA, nineteen, light brown hair, grey eyes, and good-tempered, would like to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony.

P. C. and B. W., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. P. C. is seventeen, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition. B. W. is eighteen, dark, fond of music.

ETHEL and MAURE, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Ethel is nineteen, brown hair, blue eyes, medium height. Maure is seventeen, light hair, blue eyes.

GERIE, tall, fair, fond of music, would like to correspond with a good-looking young man with a view to matrimony.

THE FLIRT'S APOLOGY.

AN! women are fickle, you tell me;
Well, yes, if by fickle you mean
A trifle less false than you men are,
And greatly more true than they seem.

"But women are cruel—so cruel!
They flutter and coax for awhile.
Then tread on the hearts that you give them,
And deal us a blow with a blow."

We are cruel—it may be, but cruel
In a million of charming ways;
So sorry at times to have hurt you—
So kind on the gloomiest days.

But you men—you calculate nicely
How near you may go and how far;
And never one moment you soften,
Or pity the hopes that you mar.

And when you at last are successful,
And the flower floats down to your feet,
Its colours are no more so perfect,
Its perfume is no more so sweet.

You leave it to lie on the roadside
(First tramping it down to the dust),
And fancy that such is your right here,
To break and to outrage our trust.

You think us so weak till we sting you,
And give you at last your deserts;
And then you turn round in your anger
And vow that all women are flirts.

Believe me that if you would let us
Be honest and true, as we are—
Not striving to conquer us always—
The world would be better by far. R. P.

ROSE, eighteen, light hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young man fond of home.

TIMOTHY and MARK, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Timothy is twenty-two, brown hair, grey eyes, of medium height, fond of home and children. Mark is twenty-one, dark hair, hazel eyes, dark, handsome, of a loving disposition, fond of dancing. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty-two, dark, thoroughly domesticated, fond of children.

STOKER and FIREMAN, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Stoker is twenty-two, light hair, blue eyes. Fireman is twenty-one, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children, of medium height.

T. B. and E. H., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. T. B. is twenty-two, of medium height, fair, loving. E. H. is twenty, tall, dark, good-looking.

RICHILIE, eighteen, dark hair and eyes, good-looking, good-tempered, wishes to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

D. W. and M. K., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. D. W. is twenty-one, fair, brown hair, blue eyes, good-tempered. M. K. is seventeen, dark brown hair, blue eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition.

EMILIE, nineteen, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about seventeen, medium height.

S. M. W., twenty-two, fair, would like to correspond with a good-looking young lady with a view to matrimony.

FORETOP and TRESTOP, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Foretop is twenty-three, fond of music, medium height, and blue eyes. Trestop is twenty-six, good-looking, fond of dancing.

CLARICE, twenty-two, fond of home and children, golden hair, blue eyes, loving, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-eight, dark hair, brown eyes, good-looking, medium height, fond of home and children.

D. B., twenty-two, brown hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a gentleman. Must be about twenty-five, dark, fond of home, and blue eyes.

DANIEL, twenty-four, good-looking, tall, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty, fond of home.

H. L., twenty-two, fair, dark blue eyes, tall, domesticated, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony. Must be twenty-five, dark hair and eyes.

C. L. and M. F., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. C. L. is twenty, tall, brown hair, dark eyes, fond of home. M. F. is twenty-four, medium height, dark brown hair, dark eyes, and very fond of music.

H. A., B. M., and A. P., three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen. H. A. is twenty-two, good-looking, dark hair and eyes. B. M. is twenty-one, tall, dark hair, light eyes, fond of home. A. P. is seventeen, dark hair and eyes, fond of music and dancing. Respondents must be good-tempered, of a loving disposition.

CONSTANCE, twenty-three, brown hair, hazel eyes, tall, domesticated, good-tempered, fond of music, would like to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be twenty-four, fond of home, fair, loving.

D. F. H., twenty, light brown hair, blue eyes, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen, tall, fond of home and children.

F. T. and J. L., two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. F. T. is dark. J. L. is fair. Respondents must be fond of home and music.

S. B., twenty-two, dark hair, hazel eyes, medium height, fond of home, wishes to correspond with a young man about twenty-six, medium height, good-looking, fond of home.

BILL, twenty, medium height, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty-three with a view to matrimony.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

LAURA is responded to by—S. E., eighteen.

M. H. by—Elsie E., auburn hair, grey eyes, loving, and tall.

W. E. by—Maggie B., medium height, brown eyes, and dark.

CHARLIE by—Marie, good-looking.

ALICE by—Robert, twenty-two, handsome, dark hair, hazel eyes.

B. C. by—G. M. F., twenty, light hair.

CECILIA by—Albert Edward.

FEED by—Gulielma, nineteen, brown eyes, dark, fond of home.

BOB by—Undine, eighteen, golden hair, blue eyes, tall, domesticated.

TRIN by—W. E.

MARY D. by—W. E., thirty-six, a widow, fond of home, loving.

FANNY SHARVIN by—Laura C.

G. C. by—M. F. L., twenty-two, medium height, fair, thoroughly domesticated, of a loving disposition, fond of home.

RESPONDING GILES by—Rosa N., eighteen, domesticated.

N. C. by—E. C. G.

FIRING KEE by—Vic, twenty-one, tall.

DIRECTOR by—Viv, twenty-three, dark.

M. S. by—E. B., twenty-two, fair, good-looking, fond of home, medium height, domesticated, of a loving disposition.

B. F. by—E. C., seventeen, dark, fond of home, and loving.

DIRECTOR by—Jeannie M., medium height, light brown hair, hazel eyes, good-looking, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children.

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